

VOLUME ELEVEN • NUMBER ONE • SPRING 1990

# HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

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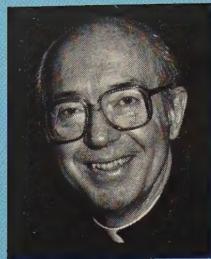
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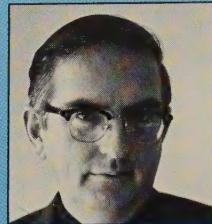
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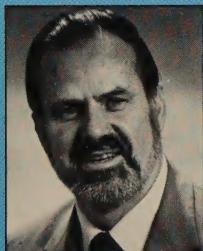
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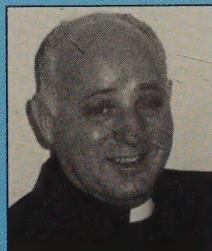
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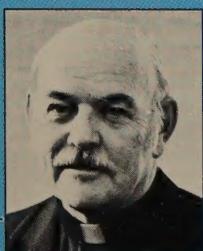
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Authors are responsible for the completeness and accuracy of proper names in both text and bibliography. Acknowledgments must be given when substantial material is quoted from other publications. Provide names of author(s), title of article, title of journal or book, volume number, page(s), month and year, and publisher's permission to use material.

Illustrations, if any, should be submitted as high-quality, glossy, unmounted black and white photographic prints. Do not send original artwork.

Letters are welcome and will be published as space permits and at the discretion of the editors. Such communications should not exceed 600 words and are subject to editing.

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# EDITOR'S PAGE

## ENTH BIRTHDAY PROMPTS GRATITUDE

**M**any people celebrate birthdays as occasions for feeling pride. The person who reaches the age of 100, or even 21—like the child who announces “I’m 6 years old today”—is unlikely to manifest any regret over the attainment. Usually, the elderly and the young expect nothing but compliments when they blow out the candles that signal the completion of another year of their life span. But people in the middle years of their life tend to view their birthdays with a mixture of emotions. They are often hesitant about disclosing their true age; consequently, many persist in facetiously claiming, year after year, “I’m just 39.”

Organizations and institutions generally act, in regard to their birthdays, like individuals who are proudly advanced in years: they boast about their longevity. Restaurants, universities, and banks, for example, woo clients by prominently posting signs like “Established in 1889” or “Since 1927.” Unlike most middle-aged individuals, they don’t seem to be concerned about their mortality. Moreover, an organization or institution is unlikely to expect that its patrons will find anything but reassurance in the reminder that it has been in business for a long time. Quality, reliability, and customer satisfaction are among the virtues implied, and presumably guaranteed, by any outfit that can claim to have successfully remained in operation for an impressive number of years.

This issue of **HUMAN DEVELOPMENT** is sent to our readers as an invitation to join our editorial staff and board of editors in celebrating the journal’s

tenth birthday. It was in the spring of 1980 that we told our charter subscribers that “the articles in this inaugural issue . . . represent our firm intent to select topics and points of view that will prove useful to the readership for which **HUMAN DEVELOPMENT** is designed, that is, people striving to exert a positive and helpful influence on others in their care, especially by helping them become fully mature and alive.” Now, forty issues later, we rejoice that our publication is thriving, in spite of a few painful seasons when financial difficulties and other unanticipated problems sorely tested our resourcefulness and endurance. At this present point in our history we have much to be grateful for, and there are many individuals and groups deserving of our special thanks.

We are particularly grateful to all of our writers, who have so generously contributed to our pages their time, knowledge, and style. We owe thanks, too, to all of our subscribers, whose continuing support makes this publication possible, and especially to those who have, through word-of-mouth publicity, made **HUMAN DEVELOPMENT** more and more widely known and read throughout the entire world.

We send our thanks to benefactors who have made it financially possible for us to start this journal and steadily expand its circulation, and also to provide educational workshops and courses for hundreds of receptive assemblies from Dublin to Nairobi, and from Bombay to Kyoto.

We deeply appreciate the words of encouragement, recommendations, letters to the editor, and requests for articles on specific topics that our readers have thoughtfully sent to us. We are grateful also to the members of our editorial board and all the others who have taken the initiative to recruit new writers and thus promote the enrichment and improvement of this publication.

We are grateful to our consultants, critics, editorial and office staff, printers, subscription handlers, and the Institute of Living, which has provided a home in Hartford, Connecticut, for our editorial offices and other publishing operations.

With a clear realization that there is still considerable room for improvement in HUMAN DEVELOPMENT, we are thankful to God for all the heaven-sent help we have received. During all these years our own prayers, and those of many who have petitioned God for us, have been answered—we will never forget—an astronomical number of times.

Before blowing out the ten bright candles that crown our birthday cake, I want to repeat the still sincerely felt closing words of the first editorial printed in this journal: "Most of all, we hope you

will enjoy HUMAN DEVELOPMENT and ask God in your prayers to help us all make it an instrument he will bless with far-reaching, long-lasting success in contributing to the development of his Kingdom." We thank you for being with us on our tenth birthday.



James J. Gill, S.J., M.D.  
Editor-in-Chief

## Mystical Experiences Common

One-third of adult Americans report that they have had a "mystical experience, that is, a moment of sudden religious insight or awakening." This is the finding of a recent Gallup poll, summarized in *Emerging Trends*, the monthly publication of the organization's Princeton Research Center.

When the Gallup organization first began exploring religion in America in 1962, it found that 20 percent of U.S. adults reported such spiritual experiences. The proportion rose to 31 percent by 1976 and peaked at 33 percent in 1988. "One of the most interesting aspects of these phenomena," the report states, "is that they happen to the nonchurched and the non-religious as well as to people... who say religion

plays an important role in their lives."

The Gallup researchers have also found that in 1989 most Americans are trustful of organized religion and that two-thirds of them are members of synagogues or churches. But half perceive religion to be losing its influence on American life; a third see its influence growing stronger.

During the past ten years, says the report, public acceptance of marijuana has plunged from 20 percent in 1978 to 8 percent today. During the same years, America's demand for greater sexual freedom fell from 29 percent in 1978 to 22 percent today, with the sharpest downturn among youths.

# *Developmental Crises in Religious Formation*

*Quinn R. Conners, O.Carm., Ph.D.*

Over the past twenty years, Erik Erikson's developmental theory has helped us understand the process of initial and ongoing formation in religious life. A key to Erikson's theory is the concept of the crisis, an experience of disharmony or disequilibrium in a person's life, which leads to the successful or unsuccessful resolution of a particular stage of development. This article focuses on how crises occur during postnovitiate formation and how useful—indeed, critical—they can be in the formation process.

Erikson proposes that persons experience eight steps of growth in the development of personality. These steps occur within the context of personal crises. In *Identity, Youth, and Crisis*, he writes:

Each successive step, then, is a potential crisis because of a radical change in perspective. Crisis is used here in a developmental sense to connote not a threat or catastrophe, but a turning point, a crucial period of increased vulnerability and heightened potential, and therefore, the ontogenetic source of generational strength and maladjustment.

With this description Erikson suggests that crises are resolved in a mixed way—that is, the personality emerges from the crisis with both strong and vulnerable areas. Erikson has also emphasized the very important influence of social and cognitive factors on personality development, which Daniel Levinson has explored in terms of "life structure," the complex of

relationships that shape a person's development.

Erikson's comments on the important role of crises at various stages of human development are supported by the research of Levinson and Hans Selye. Levinson, whose research thus far has been conducted exclusively in men, found that a great majority of men experience a moderate to severe degree of tumult as they make transitions from one chronological stage of development to another. Selye's research on the strains of adaptation to change indicates that distress, rather than stress, is damaging to the human organism. This research suggests that some degree of stress (disequilibrium, conflict, disorganization, crisis) is a necessary prerequisite for progress to the next stage of personal development.

Recent surveys of Erikson's theory have shown its applicability to people in initial and ongoing formation. Indeed, individuals go through these stages in any life structure, including the one we know as religious life. In light of Levinson's and Selye's research, it would seem that crises that occur during initial formation serve as normal, important, and useful moments in individuals' personal development, as well as in their incorporation into the life of a religious community.

The three of Erikson's stages most commonly associated with the bulk of adult life are identity formation, intimacy, and generativity. The issues and crises associated with these stages are intertwined and continue to emerge in various forms

throughout the adult life cycle. Erikson contends that although one aspect (identity, for example) is predominant during a given period, all the other aspects are also present, and a certain degree of developmental work goes on in conjunction with the predominant work. This perspective suggests that despite the ages of people in initial formation, they are dealing with one or another of these stages and the attendant crises.

Postnovitiate formation usually requires a period of three to five years. During this time of first vows, individuals experience community life and ministry. This important period can include academic, pastoral, communal, and personal experiences that provide the context or structure within which the individuals will continue their growth and development. At the conclusion of this period, the individuals and the community determine whether a final commitment will be made. Thus, these years are crucial for both parties. The crises that occur provide valuable information about both the content of the individuals' lives and their process (i.e., the way they handle those issues). Equally important during crises are the community and the formation personnel. Their responses to both the content and the process of the individuals are important factors for the individuals to consider as they ponder a final commitment.

## **NORMAL DEVELOPMENTAL CRISIS**

The identity crisis usually occurs in the teens or early twenties. However, it is often renegotiated when an individual makes a career choice, such as the decision to enter religious life. For some it is a more serious renegotiation than for others. For example, it can surface in the academic setting of studying theology. The identity of candidates whose life structure before entering religious life was a traditional Catholic one can be significantly shaken by the theological shift they may experience through contemporary theology courses. Their whole sense of themselves and how they fit into the world can be overturned as their assumptions about God, the church, and the world are responsibly reexamined as part of their intellectual preparation for ministry. They may become angry, fearful, hostile, rigid, or disoriented. They may question their vocation, their past training, the leadership in their community or seminary, or their fellow students. Their task is to develop a new sense of self in the new life structure or to return to the old one.

The intimacy crisis for candidates in religious life can occur in a number of different ways. The most obvious is the experience of trying to relate to men or women in nongenital ways. The drive for emotional closeness, for a deeper sharing of self with another, is a normal human drive. What newcomers to religious life must learn is how to

experience that drive in a healthy way yet as a celibate. Learning this can often be a difficult but rewarding experience. Individuals often fall in love with another religious or someone they meet in ministry, and they resolve the relationship in various ways. Some discover that they can be intimate with another within the context of the vows, whereas others discover that they want an exclusive relationship and leave religious life. People who have had difficulty with intimacy before entering religious life often find that the problem resurfaces during initial formation. A crisis in intimacy can evidence itself in a number of ways. Some individuals become withdrawn and develop a rigid, formal way of relating to others. Others avoid intimacy through alcohol and drug abuse. Another indicator of difficulty with intimacy is promiscuousness, either sexual or emotional.

Another crisis for adults is generativity. It has to do with issues of caring for others, using one's power for greater responsibility, and developing a deeper interiority. Admittedly, this crisis occurs less frequently during initial formation than does the crisis in intimacy, but when it arises it often presents opportunities for growth. This crisis is commonly precipitated by some difficulty in ministry during the formation period. Some individuals may experience conflict with others on the staff of a parish or school; others may experience a failure (e.g., lack of success as a teacher or hospital chaplain). Such difficulties in ministry often result in questions about the individual's sense of vocation, and feelings of anger or fear may develop. During a crisis in generativity, individuals tend to doubt their skills and gifts, the energy they have to serve others, and their sense of commitment to service.

## **VALUE OF THE CRISIS**

These crises—which can occur not only during initial formation but also during ongoing formation—are valuable for both their content and their process. The specific content questions they raise are important for the individuals and the community in terms of vocational discernment. Do the individuals manifest the requisite flexibility of personality to continue to develop as human beings? Do they have the psychological strength to live the celibate life? Do they have the energy and skills to be effective leaders in ministry? Do their personal histories suggest that they will have enough psychic energy available for ministry? These are important questions that must be resolved before candidates for religious life make a final commitment. Obviously, these and other such questions can never be completely answered, but provincials and formation personnel need to have some assurances before calling individuals to, or recommending them for, a final commitment.

# Challenging May Precipitate a Crisis



The process questions raised by these crises are equally important. The dynamics they touch off can provide valuable information that the individuals, the formation personnel, and the religious community can use to determine the authenticity of the individuals' call to religious life and ministry in the church.

## DYNAMICS YIELD INSIGHT

The dynamics of the crisis are the emotional and cognitive responses of both the individuals and the community. The first set of dynamics is that of the individual religious. The precipitating crisis—whether in identity, intimacy, or generativity—reveals the personality, history, and coping skills of the individuals. The crisis allows both the individuals and the community to enter into the life of the individuals, depending on how public the crisis is. What is revealed is how the candidates for religious life handle adversity, difficulty, crisis. There is a sense of seeing them psychologically uncovered, with their personality weaknesses exposed. In some instances, a repeated pattern may be evident (e.g., a drinking problem or a dependent relationship). How the individuals coped (or did not adequately cope) with it in the past is important information for them and the formation personnel. How they attempt to cope with it currently is equally important. Do they try to hide the issue from the formation personnel? Do they act helpless? Do they maturely seek creative and effective ways to deal

more responsibly with the crisis? Current behavior is often predictive of future behavior. In other words, how individuals deal with a crisis in their lives now will indicate how they will deal with other crises in the future. Such insights are important in the discernment process.

The second set of dynamics is that of the religious community, and of the formation personnel in particular. How do they respond to the crises of individuals in initial formation? For just as the individuals' responses to crises reveal their personalities, histories, and coping skills, so does the community's response to individuals in crisis reveal its personality, history, and coping skills. Does the personality of the community show that it has room for people who have weaknesses? Is the community willing to work with individuals who are going through crises? Is the community clear about what it considers appropriate and inappropriate behaviors for vowed religious? Being in an atmosphere in which crises can be faced openly is important, and individuals ought to know whether they are in such a setting as they discern final commitments. It is thus important for a community to reflect on how it responds to the crises of individuals. It not only will help the community to be more responsive to the candidates but also will facilitate the community's ongoing discernment of its formation policies and procedures and its choice of personnel.

Another important part of the community response to individuals in crisis is the response of

their peers in formation. Sometimes the peers are the precipitators of crises, and often they are valuable supporters of individuals in crisis. As precipitators they may be personally involved with the individuals—for example, as dependents in a relationship or competitors in a project—and so may serve as catalysts for crises. As supporters, peers may be involved in “walking with” the individuals, challenging them, and in general giving the kind of emotional care needed by people in crisis. Peers help to communicate to the individuals whether the religious community they are joining has emotional room for them.

### CRISIS PART OF GROWTH

The absence of such crises during initial formation is cause for concern. The “honeymoon syndrome,” for example, occurs in individuals who claim to be completely at home in the community after the first day. This behavior may suggest that these individuals are controlled or repressed, unconsciously wanting to keep others from knowing them. Discernment about the appropriateness and quality of their future as religious and ministers in the church is severely limited. The fact that a crisis does not occur becomes an important piece of the process. It is often the responsibility of formation personnel to challenge such behavior, which usually precipitates a crisis for the individuals.

### CRISIS BRINGS BENEFITS

The crisis in formation is an important phenomenon. It provides much experience and information that is valuable in the discernment process, for the individuals as well as the community. The individual's preparedness to make an authentic choice for the future as a religious and as a minister in the church is vital for both parties. The life crises experienced during initial formation help form the basis for making an informed choice. Furthermore, crises provide rich material for prayer and tend to strip candidates of illusions and pretenses so that they can encounter God as they truly are. Thus crises can profoundly enhance the spirituality of individuals, which in turn influences the quality of their service to others.

The issue of crisis points out the need to have qualified personnel involved in postnovitiate formation. They must be able to help individuals face

the crises that will surface between the novitiate and final vows. The ability to do so assumes that these personnel have learned to deal with their own crisis issues in an open and healthy way and thus can help others to acquire the same skills.

There is great value in regular postnovitiate ministerial experience. A structure that permits individuals to experience the role they aspire to while still in training provides an important context for discernment. Such experience provides information and training in ministry, which also facilitate discernment.

Finally, postnovitiate formation should include regular supervision of the candidates for religious life. Regularly scheduled opportunities to reflect on their experience in community and in ministry not only support them in times of crisis but also help them develop the skills necessary for effective living and ministry in the church today.

The crisis in formation is essentially a learning tool for individuals and the community. It indicates that both are engaged in the process of bringing new life to themselves and to the religious and ecclesial community as a whole. Crises represent opportunities for growth and new life—signs of the Spirit at work in our lives.

### RECOMMENDED READING

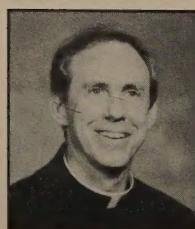
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# Women in Midlife Exlastration

Shelly Murphy, F.N.D., and Barbara Hammel, O.P., M.A.

**W**omen religious, like all women, may experience a significant vocational upheaval as part of the midlife transition. The questions that arise are often disconcerting and are part of a search for self that ultimately involves the question, "What do I want for my life?" While both women and men ask this question, their approaches to responding to it differ.

Women and men religious who struggle with their commitment to religious life during the midlife transition may wonder whether they should remain in community; in their newly emerging sense of authenticity, they may question the concept of life rooted in the evangelical counsels. They may wonder whether their commitment, made at a much younger age and at a very different level of awareness and experience, is still valid.

## SEPARATION MAY INTERFERE

Currently, exlastration is the official avenue for discernment for those who feel unable to resolve their questions within the confines of their congregations and ministries—but it may not be the best process for women. Essentially, exlastration is based on the male model of separation—that is, to detach from the known allows the "I" to form its identity. Although some time and space from communal responsibilities and congregational identity

may be necessary to put things in perspective, women religious may find that total detachment from the relationships that have been an important part of their lives may hinder them in their quest for identity. Such relationships are integral to women's identity formation and may need to be sustained rather than aborted.

Given the reality of the distinct differences in the psychological development of men and women, the process of exlastration for women needs to be examined. The nature of official exlastration is rooted in the need to resolve questions regarding commitment to religious life. The process is based on the stereotypical male need for distance and separateness, a need not necessarily shared by women or even by all men. Though it is beyond the scope of this article to explore the experience of exlastration for all religious of both sexes, it may be safe to say that the community nature of religious life prompts questions about the efficacy of separation and detachment as the preferred process of discernment.

## MEN'S MIDLIFE TRANSITION

Literature on the experience of midlife transition has proliferated during the past several years. Although much of it focuses on men and their unique crises during this time, some of it acknowledges the

very different journey of women traveling this painful path to growth. The differences in men's and women's midlife experiences become clearer and more understandable as we learn more about the differences in the developmental tasks and expectations of both sexes. The extent to which any of these findings apply to religious is currently being explored by behavioral scientists.

In our success-oriented culture, men are expected to learn to stand on their own two feet, to look out for themselves, and to make their own decisions. Generally, men are conditioned in these behaviors from a very young age, when they first experience separation from their mothers as persons other than, or different from, themselves. As boys progress through childhood, our culture's mandate for male success is reinforced by schools and the media, which emphasize the invulnerability and independence of men. The stuff of vulnerability—emotions, lack of information, and uncertainty—are associated with femininity (hence the derogatory term *sissy*). Boys learn early and quickly that they are expected to grow into strong, independent men who are responsible for their own destinies.

For many men in our culture, relationships are secondary to personal accomplishment. In men's lives, relationships tend to be supportive of their dreams rather than integral to their personal identities. It is not surprising, then, that many men in midlife transition focus much of their energy on reevaluating their careers and reassessing their occupational fulfillment. Transitional men also question their identities, which are usually rooted in an earlier developmental period (usually adolescence or young adulthood). In doing so, they understandably employ a mode of discernment familiar to them through their upbringing: they retreat from the distractions of people and commitments to seek solitude in which to weigh the pros and cons of their current dilemma and, separate and alone, they arrive at decisions congruent with their emerging sense of authenticity.

### **WOMEN EMPHASIZE RELATIONSHIPS**

Women's developmental experiences differ from men's. Never having to "separate" from mother to learn how to be female and feminine, girls learn to value relationships. They are conditioned to attend to the stuff of relationships—emotions, reactions, and body language. Girls tend to develop a "sixth sense" known as women's intuition—a sensitivity to the nuances of interaction. Female children also learn that relationships are intertwined and that the positive or negative aspects of any one relationship in their lives can affect all their other relationships.

Unlike their brothers, who learn to play in large groups and to cooperate for the sake of competi-

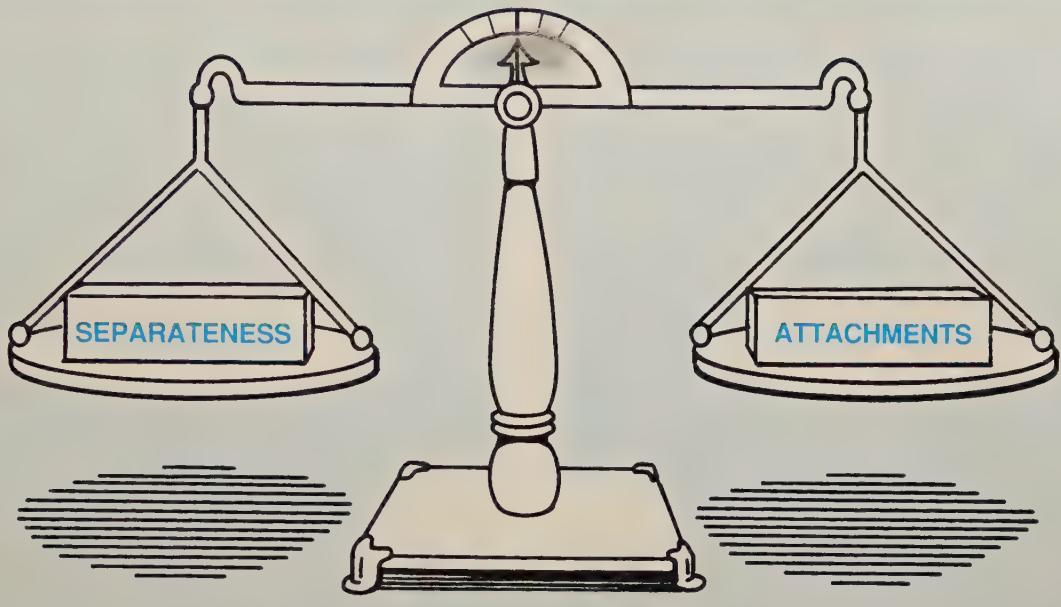
## **Women in midlife transition, like men, discover that the old answers do not work for the new questions**

tion, girls more often play in one-on-one situations. While boys will argue rules (was the ball inside the line, on the line, or outside the line?) before a game can continue, girls will often abandon a game altogether rather than argue and risk the disruption of relationships. Such early experiences teach girls to value relationships more than personal achievements or success, and condition them to perceive their development with and through others rather than apart from others. When confused or distressed, a girl tends to seek the company of another with whom she can discuss her dilemma. She is very sensitive to others' disapproval of her values, behaviors, and decisions.

Women in midlife transition, like men, discover that the old answers do not work for the new questions. They struggle with their identities, striving to ascertain who they are and where they want to go. Responding to the internal pull toward authenticity, they review their past involvements while they ponder future directions. Steeped in models of self-understanding as persons with and through others, women cannot easily divorce themselves from their relationships to pursue their questions and feelings of confusion privately.

Many women feel a strong love-hate ambivalence toward their involvements with community, others, and work. They appreciate their growth with and through others, yet resent their investment in these very relationships. They want to separate from their commitments to gain space and perspective, yet find that they cannot live without the people and places to which they are bonded by commitment. In other words, whereas men identify themselves primarily through their achievements, women identify themselves primarily through their relationships.

# Women Religious' Difficult Midlife Task



Neither women nor men have it "better" during midlife because of their cultural conditioning. They imply have different perspectives and use different coping tools to deal with midlife dilemmas. Men tend to retreat into separateness in an attempt to regain autonomy and control; women tend to retreat into relationships in an attempt to regain connectedness and rootedness. The task for persons of either sex is to fashion a balance. This is an undertaking that stretches both men and women in unaccustomed directions and calls for the use of skills that are generally not well developed, as a result of lifelong conditioning.

For women, then, midlife transition is often a period of relational ambivalence—during which they struggle with approach-avoidance conflicts toward their involvements with their congregations, families, friends and ministries. "How can I live with them?" and "How can I live without them?" are two common questions underlying the midlife challenge of personal identity.

## CONNECTION TO COMMUNITY

Because women make decisions with a deep, if often unconscious, understanding of how they affect others, women religious who begin to question their commitment to religious life in midlife tend to do so from an other-oriented perspective. They have a strong sense of connection to the congregation, the community at large, and individuals

within the community. They have nurtured relationships with all of them through the years and have grown into the persons they are through those relationships. A dilemma they face at midlife is how to live apart from their identity as women religious in a congregation while remaining a part of the relationships that have influenced their growth. This conflict may go unrecognized if they choose exlastration, a process of separation. Maintaining their sustaining relationships with the community and individuals—an integral part of their lives—is not presented as part of this process.

Through living in community, women religious choose to be involved in each other's lives. This connectivity sustains them in ministry, gives them energy and hope, and at times drains their energy and challenges their hope. Their self-understanding is enhanced through their interpersonal involvements in community life.

Not all women religious choose to invest themselves in community life. Some establish their relationships outside the community while remaining connected to it through ministry and congregational involvements. By serving on committees and task forces, they express their connectivity to the congregation and the community, yet they simultaneously form some or most of their primary intimate relationships outside the community. Although these women may not be as vulnerable in sharing themselves and their emotions in community as are those who are more directly involved,

they are nevertheless still intertwined with their sisters and are consequently affected by them.

However women religious develop their identities, they eventually realize that each of their relationships and experience inside and outside of the community is woven into their identity and affects all their other relationships. At midlife, women religious struggle to make sense of these numerous relationships as they wrestle with the question, "What do I want for my life?" They attempt to balance separateness and attachment in their lives.

## EXCLAUSTRATION IN MIDLIFE

At midlife, when the call to authenticity is strongest and claiming personal identity is the primary task, women religious may express uncertainty about their vocation and their membership in a congregation. The rediscernment involves their relationship to God, to others in the community, and to the congregation, as well as a reexamination of the call they responded to years earlier. To sort out the questions and resolve the confusion, women religious need dialogue, not isolation. The nature of women's psychological development, community relationships, and unique midlife journey to attain identity and autonomy is incompatible with the current process of exclaustration.

Given the present church structure, women religious are faced with three options: 1) they can continue their ministry while living in community, perhaps withdrawing from various community events and committees; 2) they can request a leave of absence, remaining officially tied to the congregation while living an acceptable distance away, generally alone, with the superior's permission (although this is not currently a commonly practiced approach to vocational discernment); or 3) they can request exclaustration, a distinct period of separation from community involvements and relationships. Each of these choices reflects a different level of distancing. No one method works for everyone, and no one method may be the only choice for a single individual throughout the duration of her transition.

In the case of exclaustration, all congregations follow the same general procedure, although each congregation may tailor it to its own needs. Women religious request exclaustration from the major superior and the general council, have one conference with the major superior, and then, with approval, move out of the community to live independently and support themselves financially.

This process is rooted in male-oriented values that encourage separation to gain perspective, independence to experience autonomy, and detachment from relationships to find one's identity. For women religious, the process should involve connectivity rather than separation. Some time apart

from congregational responsibilities may be helpful, and living alone may provide needed space for reflection, but detachment from the sustaining relationships formed in community can have a negative effect on women religious in midlife transition. The tasks that help some people attain autonomy and self-sufficiency may not help everyone engaged in vocational discernment during a time of confusion. For women, exclaustration should be a process of moving away from community involvements to gain perspective on vocation and personal identity while remaining in relationships with others in the community.

Too often, when women religious leave a community—even for a short time—the very women who have helped them through their adult development have not been adequately prepared for the departure. The parting can be as difficult for the community members as for the individual leaving, since they too are invested in the relationship and feel the abruptness of the separation. In her attempt to rediscern a vocation, the woman religious in exclaustration may find that she is independent and self-sustaining, yet at the same time her identity is still invested in the relationships from which she has distanced herself.

Because total separation is currently the only form of exclaustration, women religious have no alternative ways to engage in the process. Some degree of separation is obviously necessary, but what degree and for what purpose may be important factors for both women religious and their congregations. Many questions go unasked and unanswered because there are no choices. It seems that dialogue is essential between religious communities and women religious rediscerning their vocation in midlife if alternatives to the current model of canonical exclaustration are to be developed.

## INDIVIDUALIZED FORMAT NEEDED

Women religious inevitably encounter dilemmas as part of their midlife questioning. Some, because of their upbringing, personal difficulties, or vocational crises, seek out and respond positively to the current model of exclaustration. Others, however, find this model antithetical to their understanding of themselves as women and thus as persons-in-relationship. For them, a process of exclaustration that incorporates both separation and attachment is more meaningful and beneficial.

It is not the intent of this article to specify the exact form of alternative processes of exclaustration. Some women may prefer to maintain regular dialogue with a single contact person within the community. Some may respond more favorably to a format that enables them to regularly reconnect with community members through scheduled pray/play time at a local house; others may benefit

rom attendance at congregational liturgies or meetings. Some may prefer combinations of these formats in conjunction with short or long periods of separation and distance. In other words, exlastration could be individually tailored to best suit a particular woman's personality and needs.

Women gravitate toward interdependence as an expression of maturity; men gravitate toward independence. Women religious need to find ways to experience their membership in community as an interdependent reality that allows for a degree of separation. The process of rediscerning—not the ultimate outcome of that process—is the key factor of this experience. This process, like that of discerning at the beginning of association with the congregation, involves mutuality and self-disclosure, not independence and isolation. Exlastration involves a critical search for truth and must be expanded to include choices that make it a more interdependent relational process that affirms the female reality.



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# *Responding to Alzheimer's Disease*

*Richard R. DeBlassie Ed.D., and  
Peggy Kaczmarek, Ph.D.*

**A**lzheimer's disease is a serious and costly illness that affects middle-aged adults in their productive years and older adults in their retirement years. It is a form of dementia—that is, a deterioration of the intellect, personality, and behavior resulting from disease, not from mental retardation or brain injury. The disease is characterized by impairment of the victim's memory, intellectual functions, judgment, and orientation and by a shallow or labile affect. Alzheimer's disease is progressive, deteriorating, neurologic, and chronic. There is no known cure. Families may have trouble pinpointing the exact beginning of the disease because of its insidious nature. There is a progressive worsening of the affected person's ability to respond to stimuli.

Alzheimer's disease affects some two to four million Americans. Although an estimated 6 percent of the elderly over age 65 suffer from the disease, the figure mushrooms to 10 percent at age 75 and 20 percent at 85 and older. The National Institutes of Health estimate that 60 percent of nursing-home patients over age 65 suffer from the disease. It is also the fourth leading cause of death in the United States.

The *Harvard Medical School Health Letter* (April 1988) makes the following observations about Alzheimer's disease:

There is little reason to think that the increasing prevalence of Alzheimer's disease has resulted from a harmful feature of the modern environment—something present now that wasn't around a few centuries ago. People have probably always had roughly the same potential to develop the disease, provided they

lived past the age of 45, which is about the earliest point at which symptoms ever develop. What is hopeful about Alzheimer's is the currently rapid rate of progress in understanding the disease. Even so, neither the fundamental cause nor the specific disorder of brain function is completely understood. It seems clear, though, that Alzheimer's disease is not a generalized decline in function of the sort once attributed to "aging." Nor is this type of dementia a result of "hardening of the arteries." Rather, it appears to be a specific degeneration occurring primarily, though probably not exclusively, in one system of brain cells. These cells are located at the base of the brain; they send information to broad regions of the cerebral cortex and to an area known as the hippocampus, which is vital to formation of memories.

## **DEVELOPMENT AND SYMPTOMS**

Alzheimer's disease develops very slowly, and memory loss frequently is the first sign. The loss becomes severe and soon bears little relation to the memory lapses of normal aging. A person who is aging normally may misplace the car keys; a person with Alzheimer's disease may forget that he or she ever owned a car. The ability to write checks or to make change disappears. The affected person can read the same book over and over again because he or she cannot remember having read it before. The ability to read remains for some time, long after the ability to understand what one is reading departs. A son handed his mother a greeting card from an old friend. The mother, a victim of Alzheimer's disease, read the card aloud from beginning to end in a monotone, then read "A Hallmark Card" and the price code

printed on the back. None of the words had any meaning to her.

As the disease develops, affected individuals may lress for a snowstorm in midsummer, forget the names of their children, fail to recognize their spouses, or, while sitting in their own living rooms, ask when they will be going home. They cannot feed or dress themselves. In the disease's final stages, these people cannot speak or walk. Eventually they die, often from pneumonia, urinary tract infections, or other complications that develop in bedridden patients.

There is no cure for Alzheimer's disease, although researchers have been experimenting with various drugs that increase the body's supply of acetylcholine. The progression of the disease cannot be halted, but simple aids such as notes around the house ("Your lunch is in the refrigerator" on the refrigerator door; "Turn off the burner" above the stove; "Write down the name and number" beside the telephone; "Don't go out—I will be home at 3:30" on the front door) can increase the period during which people with Alzheimer's disease can function independently.

The previously quoted *Harvard Medical School Health Letter* speaks to the point of the burden of Alzheimer's disease:

After a while, the patient with Alzheimer's becomes quite indifferent to his or her condition. The burden of the disease is then borne by family members, who must themselves provide round-the-clock supervision and care for the patient's most basic needs—or make the decision to place the patient in an appropriate facility. It is widely recognized that facilities and support systems for patients with Alzheimer's disease, and their families, are often inadequate. There is a need not only for better long-term inpatient facilities, but also for "respite care"—arrangements allowing for families of patients being cared for at home to have periodic relief.

## ALZHEIMER'S IN THE FAMILY

Alzheimer's disease has been described as "a funeral that has no end." It takes a heavy toll, not only on the victim but also on his or her family. Caring for someone with the disease is an exceedingly taxing and frustrating experience that requires considerable stamina, fortitude, patience, and love. Experts offer a number of care guidelines.

- Provide the patient with an uncluttered and well-organized environment and consistent routines. In the early stages of the disease, use memory aids such as labels and pictures on appliances and doors, especially in the bathroom.
- Provide the patient with clothing that has elasticized waistbands instead of buttons and zippers, and slip-on shoes without laces.
- Install grab bars in the bathroom, strong railings

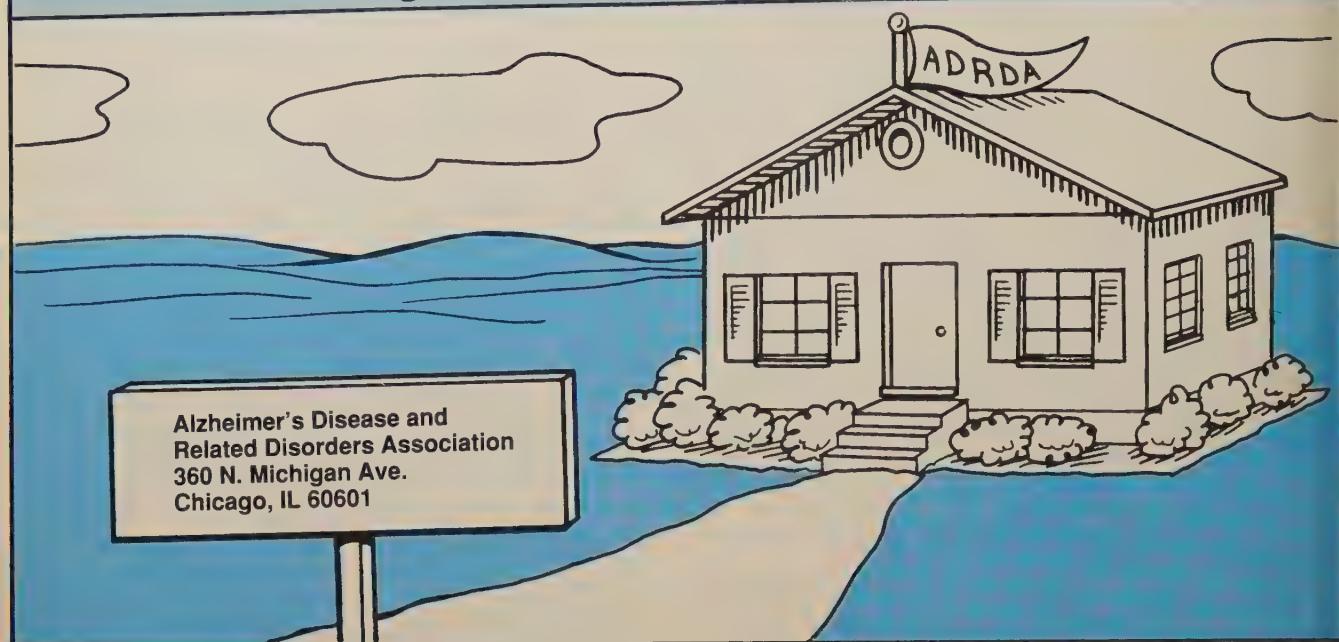
on staircases, and nightlights in poorly lit but frequently traveled areas.

- Have the patient wear an identification bracelet inscribed with his or her name, address, phone number, and the words "memory impaired."
- Provide instructions in a soft, calm voice, using short sentences and simple words.
- Allow the patient to perform tasks within his or her capabilities, such as watering plants or folding laundry. Keep the tasks simple and focused on one step at a time.
- Find satisfaction in what one can do with the patient; do not hold excessive expectations.
- Recognize that family members of patients with Alzheimer's disease often feel despair, resentment, guilt, and sadness.
- Avoid angry outbursts but acknowledge the right to feel anger toward the patient.
- Do not assume that the patient does irritating things because he or she is vindictive or mean.
- Learn as much as you can about the disease. Check your public library for the *American Journal of Alzheimer's Care*.
- Get in touch with the Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders Association (ADRDA), 360 N. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60601, an organization that has assisted many families immeasurably in dealing with the burden of the disease. They publish a quarterly newsletter that includes suggestions for caregivers.

## CAREGIVERS HIDDEN VICTIMS

Service providers, especially those in pastoral settings, are often sought by caregivers and families for assistance and counsel relative to the Alzheimer's victim. Service providers need to look beyond the visible victim of the disease to the more hidden victim, the caregiver. Providing care for a spouse, a parent, an in-law, or a sibling with Alzheimer's disease is an enormous responsibility and burden. Because the disease is progressive, the role of the caregiver increases proportionately as the victim's condition deteriorates. Caregivers are totally responsible for the demented person's quality of life because they must supply the skills, judgment, and decision-making capabilities that the victim has lost. Caregivers are immersed in their role 24 hours a day, seven days a week, for extended periods of time. Lynn W. McBroom, in the journal *Counseling and Values*, reports that the most common caregivers for demented older persons are spouses (38 percent), children who live outside the parental home (20 percent), children who have remained in the parental home (14 percent), and others (28 percent). Grown children who take on the role of caregiver experience role reversal and accompanying guilt as they parent the "child" their parent is becoming. Typically, the person who assumes the role of the primary caregiver is a

# An Essential Source of Help For Caregivers to Alzheimer's Patients



woman—usually the patient's spouse, daughter, or daughter-in-law. Even though one person may be identified as the primary caregiver, the job of caring for a demented person is too much responsibility to be carried out singlehandedly. The extended family and family members of the primary caregiver will need to contribute in various ways.

The caregiver and the caregiver's family experience different degrees of anxiety and stress relative to their new roles. Caregiving prompts change and restructuring in the existing family system, and the family may experience health-related problems as a result of the long-term stress. In *The 36-Hour Day*, Nancy L. Mace and Peter V. Rabins suggest that regular family meetings be structured in order to provide a forum in which current issues can be discussed and future decisions anticipated. Children and teens should be included in such meetings; they need information about Alzheimer's disease, and they also need to be encouraged to express their feelings. They may be angry about loss of attention from their parents, or embarrassed to bring friends home because of the unpredictable and idiosyncratic behavior of the demented relative. Adults often harbor the misconception that they protect children and young adults by excluding them from the decision-making process. The practical need to work together in the care of the demented older person can help to bring the family closer together or serve to divide and fragment it. The family meeting is one means of uniting the group by encouraging and promoting communica-

tion within the family structure. Family members can also use meetings to provide a supportive base for the primary caregiver by reinforcing and recognizing his or her efforts. The Alzheimer's victim is typically not able to give the caregiver recognition and in some cases may become hostile and accusatory toward the caregiver.

## HAVE SOLUTIONS READY

Caregivers and their families should be encouraged to take proactive rather than reactive roles. As they educate themselves about the disease, they will become better equipped to make informed decisions. Families should be encouraged to anticipate the difficult decisions they will have to face and to begin generating solutions before crises occur. Families will be required to make decisions related to financial matters, legal guardianship, and the safety of the Alzheimer's victim in relation to driving a car and living independently. Eventually the family may need to make the painful decision to place the relative in a nursing home. Families can consult with physicians, lawyers, pastoral ministers, counselors, and social workers for assistance in dealing with these issues.

The caregivers, their families, and other relatives have an extended time over which to experience grief, and they may need to grieve each significant loss of functioning or change in the Alzheimer's victim. As the role of the caregiver increases, it underscores the relative's loss of autonomy.

Caregivers and their families should be encouraged to become familiar with the Kubler-Ross model of grief. Knowledge of the process of grief will validate the conflicting feelings experienced—denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. Often people are surprised to learn that anger is a natural part of the grieving process. Grief may also be viewed as a process that can promote increased self-understanding and inner spiritual strength.

Caregivers may experience a tremendous sense of isolation and helplessness. They should be strongly encouraged to contact the ADRDA to find out if a local support group exists. Such groups provide a supportive environment and have a strong educational component. They also provide a place for caregivers to share practical ideas for resolving caregiving issues as well as suggestions for coping strategies. Membership in a group can rescue the round-the-clock caregiver from a sense of isolation and promote sharing with others who truly understand the demands of caring for an Alzheimer's patient. Because the people in the group will be caring for relatives who are in different stages of the disease, the caregiver can develop expectations for the future. If there is no local chapter of the ADRDA, the caregiver can approach his or her church for assistance in starting one. The caregiver may also benefit from individual and family therapy that focuses on specific issues related to the Alzheimer's victim.

## SELF-CARE FOR CAREGIVERS

The counselor, priest, or pastoral minister who works with families and caregivers should support them in their efforts but should also encourage them to recognize and attend to their own needs. The following are some self-care strategies suggested to caregivers by experts.

- Monitor your health. Proper rest, nutrition, and exercise are important. Avoid excessive consumption of caffeine, drugs, alcohol, and food.
- Maintain outside friendships and hobbies. By allowing yourself respite from the Alzheimer's victim, you will be able to approach your task with renewed energy.
- A keen sense of humor has a positive impact on mental health and physical stamina.
- Read *The 36-Hour Day* (Mace and Rabins, 1981), an excellent resource for families and caregivers.
- Keep a personal journal to record your feelings and thoughts. Conclude your daily entries with a "brag" about yourself as a positive reinforcement for all you have done.
- Appreciate the little things in life; take time to stop and smell the roses.
- Use prayer and meditation as a "time out" during a stressful part of the day and/or to relax

before bedtime.

- Indulge yourself occasionally with a special treat: order out for a favorite food, buy yourself a present, or see a movie.
- Seek individual counseling and/or ask your church to sponsor a support group for caregivers.
- Adopt the philosophy of Alcoholics Anonymous: take one day at a time.

## LONG AND DIFFICULT TASK

Alzheimer's disease is a devastating chronic disorder that attacks its victims' intellectual capacities and then their physical capabilities. It affects the essence of a person by robbing him or her of memory and mind. Death is the only release from Alzheimer's disease. The hidden victim of the disorder is the caregiver, who is attempting to provide 24-hour-a-day care for extended periods of time. A victim of Alzheimer's disease may live for five to ten years after diagnosis. It takes a long time to say goodbye. The single most important job of the caregiver is to take care of himself or herself so that he or she may continue to care for the Alzheimer's victim.

## RECOMMENDED READING

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# THAT'S QUITE ENOUGH, THANKS

[goes-tohouse.net](http://goes-tohouse.net)

## August the Sixth

Their six-day toil done,  
Jesus led Peter, James, and John  
high up and was glory-lit.  
He, Moses, and Elias weighed  
the glory's cost: his exodus.  
A cloud, enveloping them, boomed:  
"Here is my pride and glory."  
Touch brought the three to earth.

Reading for August sixth,  
the day my father wriggled,  
last century, into this world,  
and day I first time offered  
sacrifice (he serving) for the world,  
and day we dropped something  
heavy on the world—  
Transfiguration.

6 August 45. God's exodus?  
the wartime breakfasting  
is done in a violet flash,  
kimono bloom of light  
printing the flesh distinctly.  
Co-pilot of the *Enola Gay*  
has it dawn in a flash:  
"My God, what have we done?"

Six August. Circling back,  
the living fly here to bow  
under the mushroom shadow;  
softly they tread the streets  
upon burnt-in white shadows,  
and stubbornly, from lungs  
with a shadow-scar, resolve,  
"Never again, earth."

The six-shooters of August  
go silent for a change  
before the eclipsed face.  
Its large-eyed sorrow comes  
face to face with our expediency.  
Behold the man, we're told—  
a face with its look on us,  
its shining withheld.

# S

uddenly we find ourselves in the 1990s. Impossible to imagine what shape this final decade of our century will take, but in its backward look it has much to be sober about. No such illusions as at the end of last century!

The nightmare years refuse to be screened out. We got a recent reminder of them in the debate about whether the Carmelite nuns at Auschwitz should move out of their convent, a former warehouse outside the old extermination camp. In the *Wall Street Journal* of September 12, 1989, Michael Novak gave a telling argument for the affirmative. (Independently of him, it prevailed.) Novak began with the recollection of a former inmate, a Pole, that when the crematoria began to operate, "it was a shock so great that one lost one's belief in everything, even in God." Novak was not himself claiming "that God for even a single instant ignored the immensity of Auschwitz." But he did argue that what remains of the camp today "should not be visibly with signs of religious faith, of God's presence, of hope," for these signs of lasting, irrepressible life would be "discordant with the desolation proper to Auschwitz-Birkenau as many Jews remember its reality."

The desolating experience of the Holocaust has made the world Jewish community determined to keep pressing its message: "never again." This continuing sharp cry against the extremes of nationalism—which has proved hard to implement in Israel, as it would anywhere—this reminder of genocide, has been taken up by many voices. Even from the land of the gulags we hear: never again such a massacre as of the Polish officers in Katyn Forest; never again such meanness of spirit as that which crushed Wallenburg, the Swedish rescuer of Jews; never again a flouting of international law as in the invasion of Afghanistan.

The same spirit has had its moment also in the Southern Cone. The past president of Argentina, Raúl Alfonsín, upon taking office on December 10, 1983, set up a National Commission on the Disappearance of People so as to gather evidence of atrocities committed by the military junta. The commission's report, available in English from Farrar, Straus and Giroux, makes appalling reading. Torture—the application of the rubber hood (*la capucha*), the electric prod (*la pecana*), and the club—figures in almost every firsthand account of arrests and police action. The accounts yield almost nothing in their cruelty to what we read of the martyrdoms of St. Jean de Brebeuf and St. Andrew Bobola. The commission, calling these police actions "the gravest and most unmitigated perversions," makes it quite clear that they were not just the work of some sadistic individuals given free rein by the zeal of counterinsurgency. Rather, the cruelty was so methodical and followed such a

uniform pattern everywhere that there remains little doubt that it was designed and prescribed at the highest levels. The title of the report is *Nunca Mas (Never Again)*.

## INTIMIDATION STRATEGY EXPOSED

An even more detailed and verifiable report followed the loosening of the hold of the military government in Brazil: *Brasil: Nunca Mais*. Every scrap of evidence in this thick tome was spirited out of the archives of the Supreme Military Court in Brasília by lawyers, with the coordinated backing of Cardinal Arns and of Jaime Wright, a leader of the Presbyterian Church / USA in Brazil. As told by Lawrence Weschler in the *New Yorker* (May 25 and July 1, 1987), the operation makes detective-story reading. The purpose of publicizing each particular case, with no detail spared, was to expose the strategy of intimidation that gave rise to it. The purpose was to help Brazilians see that economic prosperity, social tranquility, and any other pious end bought at such a price is drained of all value.

On April 3 and 10 of 1989, Weschler wrote again in the *New Yorker* about widespread imprisonment and psychological torture under the military regime in Uruguay in the early 1980s. What started as a reaction to the urban guerrillas, the Tupamaros, turned quickly into a cancer. A figure who emerges movingly from this account is the Jesuit Luis Pérez Aguirre, undaunted coordinator of the Montevideo branch of SERPAJ, a human rights organization based in Argentina. Aguirre—*Perico*, or "Parakeet," the Jesuits call him—continues to this day at his SERPAJ office, when he is not in the countryside at the orphanage he runs on a small farm. President Mitterrand, offering him a human rights award not long ago, asked if he could provide Aguirre with anything he needed. Yes, Aguirre answered, a machine to keep our milk refrigerated from milking time until it can be delivered. (I see him still before me, a short, quietly smiling man, talking calmly to us about all that, with a little girl in his arms and an eye out to the other children gathering for lunch.) Weschler, in his account, talks of the line of cigarette burns running up each of Perico's arms.

Cigarette burns are at the center of a short story, "Press Clippings," by the Argentinian Julio Cortázar (available in *We Love Glenda So Much and A Change of Light*, Vintage Books, 1983, translated by Gregory Rabasa). Of all the fiction (and perhaps even fact) of this painful century, "Press Clippings" stays with me most naggingly. It is a meditation on "the violence in all the political and geographical latitudes that man inhabits." Cortázar, writing in Paris "amidst the daily accumulation of fright through cables, letters, sudden silences," builds his story out of an actual sworn account by an Argen-

# The dream of goodness and moral freedom is forever shadowed by the nightmare of anarchy and crime

tinian exile, published in Mexico, detailing all that had been done, ferociously, to relatives of hers, male and female, back in her home country.

The woman narrator of Cortazar's story, an Argentinian exile in Paris, having just read this gruesome data about people she knows, walks out at night and comes upon a child weeping. The little girl begs her for help "because my papa is doing things to my mama" with a lighted cigarette. (The story, the event, as always in Cortazar, takes on the automatism and the impossible coincidence of dream. For Cortazar, the two spheres—what is deep in our minds and what takes place outside—twine inextricably.) The narrator surprises and subdues the sadistic husband and releases the wife, who has been tied down. Then the two women reverse the treatment upon the husband. The narrator participates as if reliving a story by Jack London about tribal women in the far north executing a trapper, prolonging his spasms and shrieks. The reader gets no report of the actual horrors, only of the narrator's sense of being pushed on irresistibly to wreak vengeance, and then of her revulsion afterward. Violence begets violence.

## DISCLOSURE WITH PARDONING

The cycle has to break. That is the concern of human rights groups in Brazil, Uruguay, Chile, Argentina. In Chile, an archbishop told me, a third of those who have lived under Pinochet carry some ingrained fear; the healing has to begin. Spokesmen for human rights consider two things essential: full disclosure of atrocities along with the agents of them—no convenient amnesia—and genuine pardon—no exacting a tooth for a tooth. Regarding the latter, Lawrence Weschler records a conversation with Father Perez Aguirre:

I asked him if he could imagine ever pardoning his own torturer. "I already have," he replied. It turned out that twice already on his daily rounds he'd encountered his torturer on the street. "He tried to avoid my gaze," Fr. Perez Aguirre recounted. "But I took the initiative. I called him over. I said hello, how was he. You see, I wasn't acting the way he expected. He told me he was very depressed. He is one of the foremost accused. He said that he felt his life had become terribly complicated, that it was not good for him or anyone to live in this state of ambiguity. I showed him in a practical way that I was not angry. I told him if he needed anything to come to me. And I told him I forgave him. It's a personal, internal process that I went through from profound Christian conviction." (New Yorker, April 10, 1989, p. 95)

I think there is no human power that can lead us to this attitude, which is nonetheless crucial to our survival. It is crucial in the Middle East, in the Cold War, in the continuing struggle of black Americans, in the women's movement, in tense or abusive families, and in so many other areas. Our hopes for this attitude to prevail—for "never again" to become the norm—will be continually tempered, we know all too well, by evidence of fanatic pride and primitive passion such as impelled the murders at the Universidad Centroamericana in San Salvador. A friend of mine, John Savant of Dominican College in San Rafael, California, recently wrote me in the same vein: "In a world of so many moral ambiguities, martyrdom makes clear certain inescapable truths: that love is never facile; that its commitment risks encounter with the irrational; that the dream of goodness and moral freedom is forever shadowed by the nightmare of anarchy and crime."

Maybe, after all, the Indian peoples of Latin America have had the surest religious instinct, have understood the best. A photograph by Paul Strand is now on display in the De Saisset Gallery at Santa Clara University: "Cristo with Thorns, Huexotla, 1933." The face is white, the brown hair full and stringy, with a crown of enormous thorns. The eyes look, alternately, into their own depths and, with a mute appeal, directly at the viewer. The robe is dark, heavy, ornate. Here is the One who has known for centuries what is within every person. If our exile from *la violencia* seems ever so long and slow, here is One who has gone ahead of us the whole terrible way.



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# The Nonrational in Leadership Elections

*Fintan D. Sheeran, ss.cc.*

**R**eligious congregations have accumulated an enormous wealth of experience in the matter of choosing leaders during the past twenty to twenty-five years. That experience is still growing. Continued reports on the experience have been very helpful because they provide groups that are serious about devising better selection processes an opportunity to benefit from what others have already tried and tested. Nevertheless, we are well aware that the processes are not always adaptable; what has served one group well may not be at all suitable for another. But I believe that some leadership selection processes that have been identified and tried may basically be considered desirable for any group wishing to have a process that is not only participative but also dialogic in character. Some of them have been written about before (see, for example, "Current Trends in Leadership Elections" by Jean Alvarez and Nancy Conway, HUMAN DEVELOPMENT, Winter 1985).

The task of choosing leaders is as critical as ever. In fact, it is easy to think that it is more important than before. The demands on leadership seem to grow, and the influence of leadership in the church—at least in some respects—seems greater than ever. Be that as it may, religious are the only large group of people in the church who have significantly changed their way of selecting leadership and who go on searching for better ways of doing it. At the same time, many religious congregations are experiencing more and more difficulty

in finding leaders—not only because there are fewer members but also because, in many instances, few members are willing to accept the role. Under these circumstances, the selection process itself may be taxing, and the results uncertain in terms of their effects on the group.

Among the things that have become clear about elections is the importance of the process itself. If the election process is a divisive or otherwise bad experience, it can incapacitate even a potentially excellent leader. A divisive experience for the group at election time can make effective leadership virtually impossible—at least until a lot of energy has been expended in attempts at reconciliation, which occasionally leave leaders emotionally drained and disillusioned.

After many years of experience in living the religious life, becoming familiar with its struggles, serving in leadership roles at the local, provincial, and general levels, and playing the role of consultant and facilitator, I am aware of some of the real growth that has occurred in the area of choosing leadership, as well as some of the aspects that need further development. Many groups have gone from practically processless direct-election procedures, with straight voting and no exchange, to election procedures involving communal prayer, reflection, and wide-ranging exchange. Congregations have moved from methods focusing on individuals to methods focusing on the group, from silent nominees to interviewed nominees to nominees who

# Questions Underlying the Election Process

Who has the gifts required to lead this group?

Rational Form



What reactions do I experience toward this candidate?

Nonrational Form



themselves propose the government group's composition. As was clearly pointed out by Alvarez and Conway, the key factor is the group's selection of a method that is adapted to its needs and capacities as a group. To be stretched by a process is good for a group; to be strained by it is not. It simply complicates matters without benefit, especially in an election event. The group must be able to cope with whatever process it adopts. This means that at the very least, the process itself must not be a source of heightened anxiety; rather, it should be experienced by the participants as freeing in its operation and constructive in its effects.

## RATIONAL PROCESS ASSUMED

Experience suggests that many election processes have one considerable weakness, in application if not in conception. This weakness lies in an unwarranted assumption that has the effect of rendering the process radically naive. Setting aside the processless election method, the dynamic sequence of the great majority of methods is roughly as follows: (1) determining the needs or challenges facing the group; (2) defining the constellation of gifts and skills leadership needs in order to respond to these challenges; (3) determining who has these gifts and skills; and (4) selecting the person or persons with these qualities as leaders. The various

processes are designed to focus on the first three steps and then to help the group to act as insightfully as possible in light of the answers. All of this represents significant growth in our capacity to address the business of choosing leaders—choosing rather than assigning, choosing in light of active participation, focusing choice on a group and not just on an individual. Together, these elements constitute a logically flawless methodology. Yet, acknowledging the vast improvement they represent, one is compelled by candor to observe that they often do not work particularly well.

The underlying assumption of the steps and their sequence is that elections are predominantly rational processes. Experience says emphatically, however, that this is rarely the case. Rather, elections are highly nonrational exercises in content and character. Of course, the logical and rational play a significant part in all election processes, but the nonrational plays an equally significant, and often dominant, part in many. This is not negative; it is entirely human. Elections in our communities must be expected to engage people at much deeper levels than the logical and rational, and indeed they do—sometimes to an astonishing degree. Amazing and mysterious things sometimes happen in elections. On occasion, glitches and gremlins seem to invade the serene tranquility of even the most precisely crafted processes and most skillfully

facilitated events. But, of course, elections in any human group are highly nonrational in character; in groups with high levels of interpersonal bonding, they are inescapably so. Thus, processes that are primarily objective and logical, that focus on the neat, rational puzzle of matching needs and skills, are likely to be found wanting on many an occasion. Elections are about persons. They are not about generic persons or packages of skills but about particular persons, concrete persons, intractably "there" persons.

I do not like thee Doctor Fell,  
The reason why I cannot tell . . .

Of course you cannot tell the reason why; it is not a reason. But Doctor Fell will not, I suspect, get your vote, gifted though the worthy gentleman may be.

### FORMALIZE NONRATIONAL ELEMENTS

Some groups, most commonly men's communities, affect a cheerful agnosticism about the usefulness of processes at all, particularly processes aimed to engage the nonrational. Concerning the influences of feeling, prejudice, and intuition, they say, "Why, of course! That's what elections are all about. Don't worry about it; get on with it." But in fact, experience does make clear that groups need processes and, in general, are greatly helped by them in choosing leadership. Experience also shows that the more comprehensively the process deals with the human, the more likely it is to be helpful.

Posed in its logical form, the question underlying the election process is something like this: "Given our present situation, who has the gifts demanded in the role of leadership in this group?" The nonrational version of the question might be, "What positive and negative responses to this or that candidate do I experience?" This latter is not an objective question and, unlike the logical question, it is not really about the electee. It is a question about the elector. Questions at this level are subjective and particular.

To some extent, dealing with the human can be a matter of formalizing some elements of the enterprise that are inevitably present but are frequently left outside of the formal process. We know that conversations in the corridors are rarely about needs or objectives; they are about people. We need to formalize these conversations to some extent so that they become a positive element of the overall process. This involves helping people to be in touch, openly and frankly, with much that is at the nonrational level.

### VIEW NONRATIONAL POSITIVELY

How can we take more of the nonrational into

account in a positive way? Doing so involves some shift of focus from the candidates to the voters, from the elected to the electors. Some groups, especially those using a discernment method, do devote attention to the state of mind and heart of the people doing the electing. Frequently, however, this is done more in terms of personal preparation for the process than as an integral, ongoing part of the process itself. Within this preparatory orientation, the more common tendency is to concentrate on freedom from negative motivations and from impediments to objectivity. In other words, the desired condition is one in which the nonrational enters as minimally as possible, so that the rational factors underlying the method are clearly evident.

Helpful, explicit integration of the nonrational in such matters as elections demands first that it be accepted and planned for as an element of the whole process. Second, because it is inevitably present, it must be viewed from the outset as a positive and necessary ingredient. Failure to acknowledge the presence of the nonrational and make provisions for its open inclusion in the proceedings frequently produces the feared result: the influence of the nonrational is unhelpful and disruptive. Third, the process must not pit the nonrational against the rational. All too often, an exhortation designed to encourage objectivity on the part of the participants is delivered in such a fashion as to make the subjective suspect. This can leave the participants nowhere to go with their wealth of feelings, intuitions, and reactions.

The rational and nonrational elements may be seen, however, as complementary suppliers of very distinct but equally indispensable information, insights, and guidance—and, at times, as correctives to one another. For example, the perceptions, vision, and convictions of the leaders of religious communities concerning church and mission today, the future direction of religious life, the poor and justice, and the meaning of community are obviously very important. We need to know their views on these things. But the capacity of leaders to relate to others comfortably, to be collaborative and to understand the value in collaboration, to enable others and evoke their gifts without insecurity, to sustain challenge, to be free of the need for dominance or prominence—these things reveal themselves not at the level of rational exchange and analysis but at the level of intuition and instinctive response, of feeling and nonrational reaction, and, yes, at the level of like and dislike. Of course, these are not infallible indicators, but they are not negligible and certainly not disreputable. Consequently, at the stage of preparatory reflection, the goal is not to ensure that these indicators are excluded from the ensuing deliberation but to embrace them as positive contributing factors. This involves not only a recognition that one's nonrational responses can indeed be distorted by

bias (as can one's rational responses) but also an awareness that the bias can be identified and put in perspective.

## NONRATIONAL AS COLLABORATIVE

An election process that deliberately involves the nonrational will help the participants review the role of the elector and the demands of that role. In such a process, the appropriate levels of information and freedom on the part of the elector will be touched on—first on a general, and then on a personal, level. The participants will eventually consider the gifts and skills of the candidates but will do so in a manner that puts them in touch with their own personal responses to the candidates at the nonobjective level. Feeling responses and instinctive reactions—the very perceptions that are the currency of corridor conversations—can be identified and explored in structured exchanges. Corridor conversations are usually between like-minded and like-feeling people and generally serve only to confirm the participants' biases. When such conversations are formalized to take place between people who are not usually in dialogue with each

other, they may help to free them of their biases.

The key is to include the nonrational, in an explicit manner, as a positive element of the selection process, and to consider it to be a collaborative element in relation to the rational components. A final point concerns what may be thought of as a follow-up benefit for the elected. Communities are trying more and more to not just elect leaders but to establish them to a degree—that is, to help create the bonds of membership commitment and support that are indispensable to effective leadership. The elective process itself can contribute considerably to the establishment of a leader, particularly when the nonrational factors are handled as a positive part of the process.



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## Characteristics of High-Risk Youth

In his private practice treating adolescents, Georgetown University psychiatrist Robert L. DuPont, M.D., looks for five characteristics for high risk of substance abuse. These include:

- (1) Interest in present-tense pleasure: high-risk youth value the here and now over the rewards of delayed gratification.
- (2) Lack of empathy: youth who do not care about the feelings of other people are at a higher risk of drug abuse.
- (3) Lack of sensitivity to punishment: youth who are responsive to punishment are less likely to be involved with drugs, whereas those relatively impervious to punishment are at higher risk.
- (4) Easy lying: youth who lie easily, and often, are far more likely to have drug and alcohol problems than are youth who are honest.

- (5) Distance from and rebellion against adults and others in authority: youth who spend much of their time away from parents and other adults and who have antiauthority values are at increased risk of drug and alcohol problems.

Writing in *Directions in Psychiatry*, Dr. DuPont explains that "rarely are those [five] characteristics either totally present in or totally absent from the personality of any particular teenager." He finds that these traits tend to diminish after about age 16 to 18, as long as frequent drug use does not perpetuate them. The extent to which these characteristics are present in an individual is an indication of how high is his or her risk of drug use.

Dr. DuPont recognizes in the combined five traits "the profile of the psychopathic character." They are also, he believes "typical of confirmed chemically dependent people of any age."

# The Laity's Role in the Mission of the Church

Paul C. Reinert, S.J., Ph.D.

**I**n the view of Vatican Council II, it is clear that the Catholic Church is not so much a hierarchical, clerical organization governed and served by bishops, priests, and religious as it is the people of God—every man and woman who has been called to, and has accepted membership in, the kingdom of Christ. Each member of the church, therefore, has innate rights, privileges, and duties. In more philosophical language, Vatican II simply made more explicit the ecclesial theology of St. Paul, which defined the church as the body of Christ. Like the organs of the human body, all Christians share an essential interdependence, and each performs an essential (though perhaps different) function.

From this viewpoint, it is much more evident than it used to be that the distinction between the sacred and the secular in everyday life is not coterminous with the concept of distinct roles for religious and laypersons. Lay men and women—God's children as truly as any religious—can and should participate in the sacred, just as religious can and must participate in the secular. Our Christian theology today undergirds a holistic concept of human nature, a nature that is elevated to a supernatural status through grace and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Thus, each Christian is called to a growth in the Spirit that makes him or her both more human and more divine.

## THEORY IN PRACTICE

It may be helpful if I describe in some detail what

I honestly feel was a pioneering effort to put Vatican II theory and teaching into practical and radical application. As recently as twenty-five years ago—despite the fact that a typical Catholic college or university, unlike a seminary, has always primarily served laypersons rather than religious—there was not a Catholic college or university in the United States that was governed according to the principles of Vatican II. Typically, Catholic colleges and universities in the United States had followed most of the practices and policies of other private institutions. For instance, the student bodies were a combination of laypersons and religious, and laypersons held administrative, teaching, and staff positions (although they rarely held such key positions as dean and never served as presidents). Nevertheless, there was a striking difference between Catholic and other public and private American colleges and universities: membership in the chief governing body, the board of trustees or directors—ultimately responsible for ownership, basic policy formation, and the making of the most important decisions on behalf of the institution—was open only to the clergy or members of the religious community responsible for the college.

All this was true at Saint Louis University, where I have served as chancellor since 1974. The official board of trustees was a group of thirteen Jesuits. The president was a Jesuit, appointed simultaneously to the position of rector, or superior, of his community. The rector-president was also chairman of the all-Jesuit board of trustees, in accor-

dance with a pattern that had been followed since the university's founding more than 150 years earlier. Without my describing all the agonizing details of the discussions, debates, and threats that took place during months of negotiations, you can probably imagine the earthshaking repercussions of our announcement on January 21, 1967, that a new board of trustees had replaced the former Jesuit board. The 28-member body of the board comprised eighteen laypersons—Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish—and only ten Jesuits. The chairman of the board was a layman. Hundreds of times, then and since, I have been asked, "Why did you do it?" And my honest answer is still the following:

1. Although there were other considerations (which I will mention later), I was primarily motivated by the conviction that the clarion call of Vatican II for the highest possible levels of partnership with the laity in every mission and ministry of the church deserved a whole-hearted and full response. If the Spirit was clearly calling, it was no time for fear, doubt, and hesitancy.
2. After wide consultation with responsible canon lawyers, I became convinced that in American civil law, the ownership of a Catholic college by a religious community was highly questionable. Like every American college, a Catholic college must have a state charter, which places it in the form of a public trust so that its assets may not be used or disposed of at the will or whim of the religious community. It follows logically that the governing body should be representative of the general public, in whose interest the institution functions.
3. Historically and experientially, it seems clear that laypersons, especially those with a stake in the college or university, have both a right and a legitimate desire to participate in basic policy formation and governance. Obviously, Saint Louis University had needed and sought lay expertise on its faculty and staff. In order to best serve the interests of the institution, the governing board also needed lay expertise—the vital viewpoints and insights of graduates, parents, consumers in the marketplace, persons in government and law. Lay participation seemed essential in terms of access to monetary resources, business and marketing acumen, and scientific expertise; none of these could be provided to the extent necessary by the religious on the board, talented and dedicated though they were. To restate my point bluntly: if we had not added laypersons with a wide variety of talents to our board, we would have been guilty of gross injustice because we would have deprived the institution of the only available resources that

could guarantee genuine academic quality, adequate funding, fiscal stability, and responsible planning for the future.

## LAY PARTNERSHIP TODAY

In the case of Saint Louis University, this transition to full lay participation at the highest level of governance took place twenty-five years ago. I think it can be documented that because of this dramatic restructuring, the university is a much stronger institution today, both academically and financially. Hence, it is better able to carry out the Jesuit philosophy of education, to which the institution is still as fully committed as it was before the change was made. The vast majority of Catholic colleges and universities have moved in the same direction, some more fully than others. Insofar as I have been able to ascertain from personal contacts and from studies and surveys that have been conducted, the vast majority of these institutions' presidents would agree that full lay participation at the board level has played a major role in strengthening their schools. One survey I saw included the question, "If you were again faced with the question of restructuring your board to include full lay participation, would you do it?" Not a single president of an institution indicated that she or he had second thoughts. Another key issue, of course—one that probably generated the greatest opposition to the original plan to move in the direction of lay board membership—was the concern that the basic mission of a Catholic college or university would not be adequately understood or enthusiastically endorsed by lay trustees, and that their participation might even cause an erosion of Catholic and moral principles in the operation of the institution. The response that I have heard and seen, and certainly the response at Saint Louis University, has been that the Catholic (in our case, Jesuit) philosophy of education has been not only supported but also strengthened by the presence of laypersons on the board. In fact, many lay board members seem more concerned about the preservation of our special educational mission than do some of the religious.

## LAITY AND RELIGIOUS WOMEN

I think this topic has far-reaching implications for the issue of fundraising and development in religious communities of women. My conviction, supported by over twenty-five years of direct experience, is that the full participation of laypersons at the board level is the only answer to a serious question: Where is the money coming from, in this competitive world, for the support of various religious communities, and particularly for their aging members? Every aspect of a successful, professionally planned and executed fundraising program

speaks for the critical importance of our partnership with laypersons in such ventures.

I think it is essential that some members of the religious community be given the time and training to become professional fundraising and development officers. Nevertheless, I am convinced that the community will need the professional help of laypersons, either as staff members or as consultants and advisors, who have established themselves as truly experienced and successful fundraising professionals.

It is abundantly obvious that the source of the financial support we need must be laypersons or the corporations and foundations governed by them. Obviously, the money will not come from religious, who have taken the vow of poverty. Yet one of the most serious problems for Catholic colleges and universities, despite apparent lay participation at the board level, is the perception that the role of the laypersons on the board is to raise and contribute money, whereas only the religious on the board are competent (and entitled) to make the policy decisions regarding the institution's fiscal and educational policies. In fact, the very few colleges that have consulted me because they were having trouble after putting laypersons on the board were clearly those that had not honestly given the laypersons full participation in the governance of the institution—only the task of providing the money.

In many cases, fundraising is carried out through institutional apostolates, such as colleges, high schools, hospitals, and health clinics, that probably already have their own fundraising and development programs. A major concern is the need to support members of the community who are retired, still in formation, or in various unsalaried positions. I have been involved with two communities that are currently endeavoring to build up an endowment fund, the income from which would fund the operational costs of retirement homes for their members. In both communities, the need for such funds has risen to crisis proportions. The traditional means of supporting the retired sisters have been rapidly declining because of the decreasing number of salaried members of the community and the rising costs of health care.

I would like to share some observations that I hope will be helpful in raising fund for such purposes. I will highlight the special importance of lay participation to the success of such efforts.

1. Full disclosure of a religious community's financial predicament to laypersons has understandably been much less common than disclosure of the financial situation of any of the community's high schools or hospitals. Yet it is equally, if not more, important that the financial status of the community itself be thoroughly analyzed and understood by professionally competent businesspeople, bank-

## Where is the money coming from, in this competitive world, for the support of religious communities, and particularly for their aging members?

ers, insurance agents, and accountants if a sound, realistic campaign for financial support is to emerge.

2. As would be expected, the lack of experience on the part of major superiors and religious communities in the field of fundraising leads to various problems that must be confronted promptly and firmly. For example, religious superiors must be careful not to insist on unrealistic expectations, endeavoring to impose them on either their own religious fundraisers or lay staff or volunteers. The amount of time needed to plan, research, and organize a sound fundraising program and to cultivate the interest of a realistic list of prospective donors can be about ten times the amount required for the actual fundraising itself. Most fundraising campaigns fail because of a lack of careful planning and a failure to identify and cultivate major donors, who are absolutely essential to a campaign's success. For example, an effort to raise money for the support of retired sisters will not be an exception to the universal rule that 80 percent of the funds will and must come from about 20 percent of the donors.
3. The common and understandable fault on the part of major superiors is their failure to set aside enough of their own time to provide the leadership necessary for cultivating major donors. Many a major superior is overburdened and can easily justify devoting time to other pressing demands, thus postponing (or neglecting to make) appointments with the few major prospects who could be responsible for 80 percent of all the money raised.

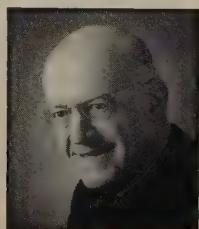
# Only a balanced religious-lay partnership can guarantee the ultimate success of our fundraising programs

4. The compilation of a list of prospects is a difficult challenge for a religious community. The sisters who are assigned to a specific institution (for example, a high school), and particularly those responsible for fundraising in that institution, will urge those planning the campaign for the general community to stay away from their giving clientele. This is perfectly understandable but cannot be accepted universally, because there will always be prospective donors who are capable and willing to make substantial contributions—not only to the high school, from which they or their children may have graduated, but also to the religious community, which has provided the sisters who teach at that high school.
5. In all the necessary preliminary and planning efforts, laypeople often do a much better job than the religious—partly because of their resources and expertise, but also because of the fact that they can take a somewhat more realistic and less emotional approach than the

religious. For example, an obvious pool of prospective donors to the religious community's retirement fund would be the graduates of the grade schools these sisters have operated. Although the records of the grade-school graduates have not been preserved, professional lay fundraisers have techniques for compiling a fairly complete list with the help of information the sisters can provide.

6. In building a campaign and determining its goals and time frame, the financial situation of the typical prospect must be very much kept in mind. For the community seeking support for its retired sisters, the majority of the best prospects would probably be older people, most of whom are already retired. This means that a great deal of emphasis must be placed on developing a program of various types of deferred giving. It also means that it is necessary to recognize that although large sums may eventually be realized, they will not become available in the immediate future. This is particularly true today, when people are living so much longer than before and are concerned about providing security for the spouses who might outlive them.

The ministry of fundraising on behalf of religious women will certainly fail if the religious either try to do it on their own or hand over full responsibility to the laity. Only a balanced religious-lay partnership can guarantee the ultimate success of our fundraising programs. As in every other facet of Catholic life and ministry, laypersons should be given full partnership at every level.



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# Community Life Challenges Children of Alcoholics

R. Edmund Pigott, C.F.C., M.A., M.Ed.

Over the past few years, research has uncovered a large number of adult children of alcoholics (ACOAs) in the helping professions, particularly in the area of counseling. The helping professions seem to attract children of alcoholics—perhaps because they offer a “second chance” to save the alcoholic parent by helping others. Paradoxically, however, many ACOAs in the helping professions are unable to ask for help for themselves.

Religious life may be considered a helping profession. An ACOA may join a religious congregation for reasons similar to those that motivate other ACOAs to become counselors, nurses, physicians, or social workers. However, in addition to dealing with such ACOA issues as motivation, control, self-esteem, caretaking, intimacy, spirituality, and the ability to have fun, the ACOA religious must also learn to live within the vows and the structure of religious life. Do these elements clash with the adult-child issues and increase the pain, or are they a source of healing?

No statistics are available on how many religious are ACOAs, and very little has been written specifically about how ACOAs get along in religious life. The theories put forth in this article are based on my own experiences, the experiences of other religious ACOAs, the literature on ACOA issues, and my knowledge of religious life.

## MOTIVATION FOR ENTERING

Before considering how some basic ACOA issues affect the ACOA in religious life, I would like to discuss what, in addition to spiritual or altruistic motives, might be other motives for an ACOA to enter religious life. Many ACOAs marry young in order to escape from the alcoholic environment, only to discover that they haven’t really escaped. Might not some people leave home to join a religious order for a similar reason and experience a similar result? As Robert Ackerman writes in *Same House, Different Homes*,

Many adult children initially saw their solution to the crisis as first a matter of leaving, only to find that while they may have physically removed themselves from the source of the crisis, many of the emotional issues remained unresolved. The initial idea was “All I have to do is leave and I will not only leave all of this behind, but also my life will automatically improve.” However, many adult children left and discovered then that they did not have the psychological understanding to improve their lives.

## NEED TO CONTROL

Control is a major issue for ACOAs, whose family situations were out of control. As children they

# **It is "normal" for an ACOA to try to get control of himself or herself, others, the environment in which he or she lives and works—even God**

never knew what to expect from their parents; what was okay one day wasn't okay the next. There was no consistency, and they were unable to determine the basis for their parents' impulsive changes. So it is "normal" for an ACOA to try to get control of himself or herself, others, the environment in which he or she lives and works—even God. According to Paul J. Curtin, author of *Tumbleweeds: A Therapist's Guide to Treatment of ACOAs*,

The word "control" indicates the ACOAs' attempts to structure themselves, their relationships and their environments in such a manner as to reduce the necessity for healthy dependence and vulnerability. The emotion which provides the main source of fuel for ongoing control is *terror*. This terror is based upon issues of abandonment/rejection as well as problems regarding self-worth and self-acceptance.

While religious ACOAs may not be different from other ACOAs in their efforts to control themselves, others, and the environment, they may put a little extra effort into controlling God. For instance, there may be an element of trying to control God in prayer. A religious ACOA who has an image of God as rigid and judgmental may feel that if he or she really does well in daily prayer—both prescribed prayer, public and private, and voluntary prayer—God's vengeance may be averted, not only from the religious but also from his or her family and friends. Even the religious ACOA who has an image of God as more loving may attempt to exercise control in prayer by reminding God to allow good things to happen to the religious and his or her family and friends. Subconsciously, the ACOA reli-

gious may be saying, "I am earning God's love and approval, practicing virtue, winning merit. I have a right to God's blessing." "Let go and let God" may be a difficult concept to grasp.

The issue of control is pervasive; it flows over into other issues, such as self-esteem, caretaking, and intimacy.

## **SELF-ESTEEM INADEQUATE**

ACOAs have low self-esteem. Somehow they blame themselves for the alcoholism in the family. Even if there is no physical abuse or violence, the children of alcoholics suffer psychological abuse. The quietest, gentlest, most peaceful alcoholic is not there emotionally for the children. The children have emotional gaps in their relationships with their parents, both the addicted one and the enabler. Somehow the children get the message, "I am unlovable." When both parents are addicted, the damage is particularly devastating. Since the children don't feel lovable because their parents are emotionally distant, they may act out to get attention, or they may become superachievers in order to prove that they are worthy of love.

Another issue connected with self-esteem is the problem of not feeling a part of the family. Along with a certain lack of identity comes a desire to belong. In ACOA religious there may be a very close link between wanting to achieve to prove self-worth and wanting to be a part of something.

The ACOA in religious life may be trying to fill the void of low self-esteem through achievement within a fellowship that provides the connectedness that was missing in the family of origin. The achievements may take the form of academic degrees, positions of authority held within the religious congregation, books published, speeches given, successful teams coached, or outstanding accomplishments in teaching. But the drive for achievement may take another form in religious life, as it does in the other helping professions: caretaking.

## **CARETAKING PREVENTS BOUNDARIES**

ACOAs are excellent at caretaking. They find it easier to take care of others than to take care of themselves. In fact, if they spend their time and energy taking care of others, then they don't have to take a good look at themselves. ACOA caretakers, whether in religious life or not, tend to put into practice only one aspect of "Love your neighbor as yourself"—they focus on the neighbor to the exclusion of the self. This is strongly reinforced in the training of members of religious congregations, which focuses in large part on love of neighbor. Religious are told to put the needs of others and the community above their own. An example of this may be found in the current constitutions of a

religious congregation of men: "Called to be with Jesus in mission, we pray frequently and spend ourselves constantly for others." This is a powerful message for an ACOA religious, and potentially a very damaging one.

There is a direct link between caretaking and boundaries. ACOAs have trouble defining their personal boundaries anyway. It is difficult for people in religious life to separate their work from their personal lives; they are more or less always "on stage," particularly if they wear religious habits or white collars and black suits. The "uniform" marks them as potential helpers, and some panhandlers and derelicts looking for a handout to buy another drink may berate the religious for lack of commitment if they do not give them money. ACOA religious tend to feel guilt if they set up any boundaries at all; they feel obligated to be always "on call."

Laypersons sometimes contribute to the obliteration of boundaries. Some may feel that religious should always be at their service, and resent it when a religious protects his or her boundaries. After an encounter with such a layperson, an ACOA religious can end up on a terrific guilt trip.

Obsessive caretaking and little sense of personal boundaries can lead to burnout. Having boundaries means putting oneself first, and the ACOA religious who has been trained to put others first will strongly resist accepting the importance of putting up healthy boundaries, even in therapy. The super caretaker who erects no boundaries and has difficulties with intimate relationships is at tremendously high risk for breakdown.

## INTIMACY A PROBLEM

ACOAs have difficulty expressing feelings and being in intimate relationships. These two issues are closely linked: the safest place in which to express and share feelings is in an intimate relationship. Getting in touch with feelings, expressing them, and sharing them with intimate friends are essential if ACOAs are to grow toward wholeness.

As children, ACOAs learned not to feel, not to trust, and not to talk. According to Herbert Gravitz and Julie Bowden, authors of *Recovery: A Guide for Adult Children of Alcoholics*,

Children of alcoholics learn to distrust both themselves and others.... They survive by distancing themselves from their feelings and denying their needs. Feelings and needs are too dangerous, too painful.... Love becomes confused with caretaking, spontaneity with irrationality, intimacy with smothering, anger with violence.

While all ACOAs have difficulty with intimate relationships, ACOAs in religious life have an added deterrent—the vow of chastity. To many people, intimacy means a physical, sexual relationship.

Unless the ACOA religious develops a healthy attitude toward sexuality and understands that there can be intimacy without sexual activity, he or she runs a greater risk than the non-ACOA of developing a psychologically destructive sexual-emotional detachment. The vow of chastity can teach religious persons that they must love without seeking a return, that they must be detached so they can love God above all others, and that they should go to God without human interference.

Getting in touch with feelings, expressing feelings, understanding that chastity and intimacy are not incompatible, and developing intimacy toward oneself, others, and God are paths to emotional health for the ACOA religious.

## HEALING SPIRITUALITY REQUIRED

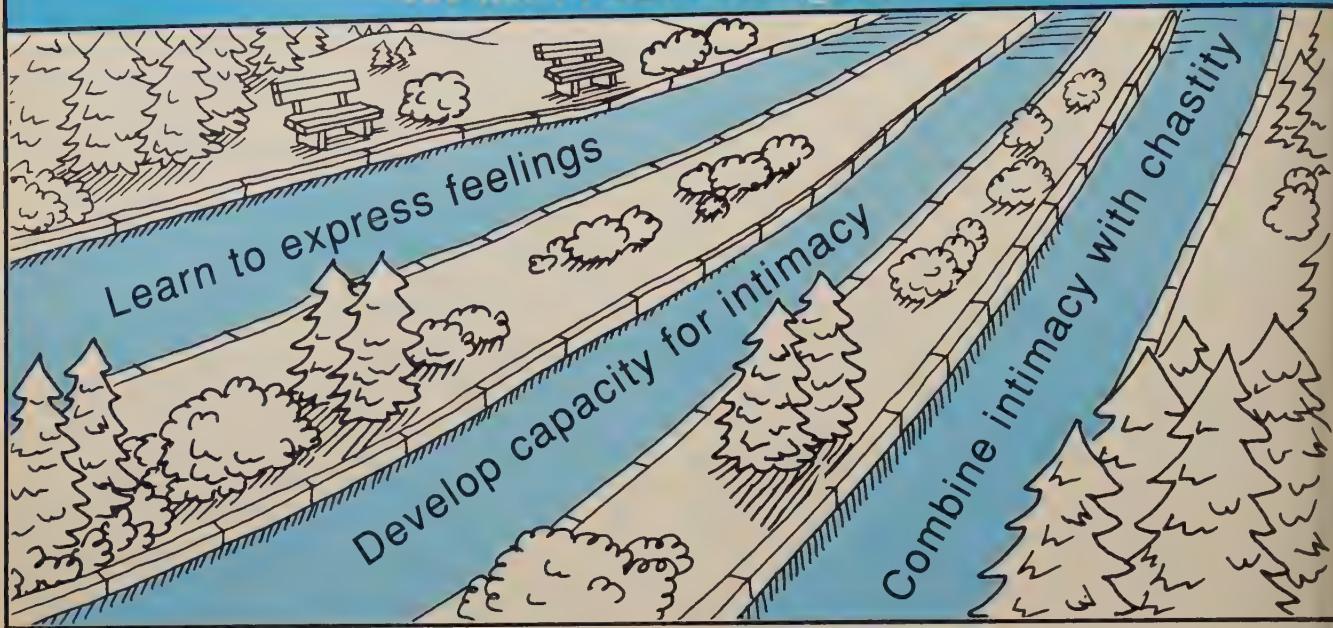
People in religious life do not have a monopoly on spirituality. I have been amazed at the deep, solid spirituality of the laypeople in the self-help meetings I have attended. In twelve-step programs, spirituality is an essential ingredient for "sobriety," no matter what the program—Alcoholics Anonymous, Al-Anon, ACOA, etc. Many members of religious congregations say a lot of prayers and perform a lot of religious duties but are not really all that spiritual. If they are just doing their duty, then spirituality is a matter of obligation and not a freeing element conducive to growth. ACOA religious must have a spirituality that is going to help them heal.

A basic element of spirituality is prayer. Prayer can be very healing, and according to what is said in both the Old and New Testaments, God wants us to ask for help, but we're supposed to leave the outcome up to him. ACOAs may have a difficult time combining risk-taking and acceptance in prayer. Fear of asking for something contrary to God's will and being rejected by God may prevent ACOAs from expressing their needs to him. Since ACOAs have to learn to risk more, it may not be wise for them to use Jesus' prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane before his crucifixion as a model for their own prayer ("but Thy will be done"), because this might be a way of not risking to ask for anything for themselves.

There has to be risk and confidence in our prayers, even our formal prayers: the risk of telling God everything and asking him for anything, and the confidence that God will give us what we need and help us do what we can through our own efforts and the talents with which he has blessed us.

The amount of risk and confidence in our prayers may depend on our image of God. An image of God as a severe judge may make a person who is considering leaving religious life hesitant to leave because God might punish him or her, or punish the family members by pulling away the spiritual support that has sustained them while he or she

## Paths to Emotional Health for the ACOA Religious



remained in religious life. This person is not going to be a happy religious. If he or she enters religious life with an image of God that is connected with an alcoholic parent, a positive spirituality will be difficult. In *Hope for Healing: Good News for Adult Children of Alcoholics*, Rachel Callahan and Rea McDonnell relate the story of a woman who idolized her father, the codependent. When as a teenager she got angry at her mother (the alcoholic), her father slapped her.

The rupture of trust in her father was so great that it had subconsciously affected her subsequent relationship with the God she called Father. God was very important to this woman; yet, she always waited for the one "shoe to drop," for God to "get" her. Ninety-eight percent of the time she was sure of God's care for her, but she waited and worried about a sudden display of God's wrath.

A negative image of God has to be turned around. The ACOA religious has the opportunity to be very familiar with the scriptures, which contain abundant healing passages. *Hope for Healing*, a marvelous meditation book, contains many loving scriptural passages.

ACOAs tend to judge themselves harshly. If an ACOA religious has an image of God as a judge or punisher and/or grew up in the practice of severe examinations of conscience, he or she may have difficulty participating in twelve-step self-help programs, particularly with the fourth step: "Make a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves." ACOAs can turn these intense examina-

tions of conscience into negative instruments with which to beat themselves up.

The following appeared in a prayer book (happily, no longer in use) of a religious congregation:

Obedience—Did I obey all who have authority, without delay, reply, or murmuring?

Chastity—Have I been careful to observe modesty and reserve with regard to others? Have I preserved a watchful guard over all my senses, especially the eyes?

Have I spoken with levity or disrespect of anything belonging to religion—as of devotional practices; or of the clergy, or of my superiors, by rashly censuring or criticizing their conduct?

Have I entertained a particular friendship for any one, or made known to him what should be kept private? (All particular friendships are opposed to charity, and some that in the beginning seem innocent end badly.)

The prayer book from which these excerpts are taken was published thirty-eight years ago. Many changes have taken place in theology and spirituality since that time. Psychology has had a very positive influence on the renewal of religious life. Even older religious who were under the influence of such negativism for years have thrown off its yoke. However, subject an ACOA religious to a fourth-step inventory that in any way resembles this type of negative examination of conscience and you are putting him or her in psychological jeopardy. An ACOA religious may have made moral inventory a lifetime hobby and must learn to

'accentuate the positive,' in the words of the old popular song. For the ACOA religious, an inventory should consist of looking for good character traits and considering a fault any trait that damages self-esteem. (The book *The 12 Steps for Adult Children*, published by Friends in Recovery, has a wonderfully positive chapter on the fourth step.)

Integral to spirituality is the ability to have fun. ACOAs have difficulty having fun. Life is very serious to them. Even without the added responsibility of being a religious, an ACOA can be a very rigid person, an excessively serious person, an unhappy person. ACOAs have lost some of their childhood and must regain it in order to be emotionally healthy. Even the scriptures recommend that we get in touch with the child within: "I tell you solemnly, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 18:3).

ACOA religious need to have fun, too; this is not contrary to spirituality, but a necessary part of health and wholeness of spirit. Many laypersons project very high ideals onto religious and would thus raise eyebrows or make negative comments if they saw a religious get up and dance at a party or wedding. Being a religious is considered very serious business that permits no time for frivolities. The concept that religious are entitled to have fun was accepted by religious before it was accepted (only recently) by some of the laity. Religious had to have fun in private, lest they shock laypeople. For ACOA religious, the difficulty in having fun is often compounded by fear of criticism from those who put them on pedestals or by inhibitions about creating a scandal. Fortunately, attitudes have changed for the better; today it is a rare person who judges a religious to be breaking the vow of chastity by dancing.

Healing for the ACOA religious includes the same steps as does healing for all ACOAs. The ACOA religious has to reach out for help to resolve the issues of control, self-esteem, caretaking, intimacy,

spirituality, and having fun, among others. In addition to the abundant literature that is available, there are self-help groups, ACOA counselors, ACOA educational groups, and ACOA therapy groups. It is worth noting, however, that trying to use all of these resources compulsively and almost simultaneously might have the adverse effect of dredging up raw feelings that the ACOA does not know how to deal with and thus engendering a fear of self-help meetings. Recovering alcoholics must be especially cautious and should go to ACOA self-help groups only under advisement. Experts recommend that even nonalcoholics test the waters by reading and attending Al-Anon meetings before joining ACOA self-help groups. It is also recommended that the ACOA shop around to find a group in which he or she feels comfortable. If group therapy is too painful, individualized therapy may be needed. Help and healing are available—for the ACOA religious, too.

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# Cross-Cultural Religious Formation

Martin O'Reilly, C.F.C.

**W**e are each formed to be who we are through living and working in a particular cultural and social context. In the same way, every religious formation is affected by the cultural and social environment in which it operates, as well as that from which the candidates come. My own position as a non-African religious formator in Africa means that I am standing on a middle ground and looking two ways: toward the congregation that has missioned me to initiate new members into the order, and toward people of a different culture, whom I am missioned to serve.

The current boom in vocations to the priesthood and religious life in Africa means that the majority of those directing religious formation are foreign-born. Many formators are extremely well prepared regarding the congregational horizon, yet nevertheless consider themselves to be lacking in an understanding of the African point of view. In this article I will address the facets of cross-cultural living that most concern formators of non-African origin and upbringing, and I will suggest how they can provide material for religious formation. My own experience has consisted of working largely with male candidates for the religious life in Liberia and Sierra Leone.

## AN AFRICAN WORLDVIEW

A person's stance for living or perception of the world is basically his or her worldview. The African

worldview is essentially religious. We should not think, as formators, that we are bringing God to Africans or, for that matter, teaching them how to pray. Rather, we should focus our ministry on helping to expand the mystery and wonder of a gracious Divinity for those in our care. Nearly all the Africans I have met during my years in formation have come from a varied religious background. Many have prayed in the mosque almost as often as they have prayed in the church. There is also an animist element to many of their faith stories. It therefore seems sensible and wise to accept as a basic dictum that Africans be encouraged to continue to pray as they always have—and when they encounter difficulties, to come and talk about them, in order that they may deepen their understanding in the Christian notion of God as Father and Mother. If we do not allow room for the gradual development of a person's faith, the religious practices or approaches to prayer fostered in the postulancy or novitiate are likely to be rooted in the shallow soil of ritual and routine. "How do you experience God in your life?" is a far more pertinent question for the young African than "How long can you pray without being distracted?" The first question implies that God can be experienced with and through the senses, whereas the latter suggests that prayer is essentially a "head trip"—all well and good for Westerners, but perhaps not for Africans.

As Westerners, we have a tendency to give God a

time slot and a space slot. This is evident in religious communities that schedule specific times for praying together. This notion of praying at an agreed-upon time does not sit well with many Africans, save those who are Moslems. Many Africans say that they pray only when there is an immediate need or because something significant has happened to them. Perhaps for this reason, prayer is more meaningful for Africans as a nighttime experience than as an early-morning experience. An African is more likely to pray over what has happened than what will happen; the past is real, whereas the future is simply a possibility.

### TIME MOVES PASTWARD

For Africans, time is both the past and the present; for Westerners, time is essentially future-bound. Time moves backward in Africa in the sense that a person who dies is said to have joined the ancestors. A sense of fatalism is embodied in the African view that all of a person's possibility inevitably returns to what has gone before. It can lead to a feeling of low self-esteem in those who see themselves and their achievements as nothing compared to those who have gone before them. The concept that life is controlled by the past makes it difficult for a person to follow a path substantially different from the lives of those who have already lived and died. First-generation religious need tremendous affirmation in the here and now so they do not feel overpowered by the past and its mores.

### DIFFERENT COGNITIVE STYLES

The African and Western mindsets are very different in character. As Westerners, we perceive knowing as the kind of understanding that can justify itself, that can be recalled and defended. We analyze, categorize, and relate ideas to reality to see if they work. Whereas the Westerner is a problem-solver, unable to rest with paradox, the African prefers to experience a situation and come to rest with it even if he or she is perplexed by it. In Liberia, the expression used to denote a puzzling occurrence is "What to do?" It is not so much a question as a statement of wonder.

For the African, thought is basically concrete relational thinking. Anything of significance is ultimately seen as personal; "You don't like me" is far more likely to be uttered after a disagreement than "Perhaps I didn't understand your point of view." Gestures are a vital part of communication. It is not enough simply to report a strong feeling; it must be acted out as well. Many Africans see Westerners as knowing too much and feeling too little.

Perhaps we need to rewrite our constitutions with stories and pictures if they are to have an impact on the lives of our African postulants and

novices. This suggestion should be interpreted not as an insult to our African candidates but simply as an acknowledgment that different peoples often have different ways of conceptualizing.

### LANGUAGE PRESENTS PROBLEMS

We tend to forget that most of our African candidates are not working with their native languages. We often speak English too fast to them, use idioms with which they are unfamiliar, and fail to use local pronunciations; this gives the Africans the sense that we speak "real" or "high" English and they do not. Perhaps more important, we fail to understand that besides a different vocabulary, each language has its own internal logic, and this logic can be carried over to another language. For example, in Liberia people say that a place is six dollars away; distance is measured in terms of taxi fares rather than miles or kilometers. If destinations are to be expressed in terms of nearness or distance from a particular point, a foreigner should be ready to understand that "small far" is shorter than "far small." If the non-African makes no attempt to pick up local expressions and to use them in ordinary speech from time to time, then the African members of the community will feel unsure and cautious in communicating. Informal conversation should not take the tone of an oral English examination; this only inhibits meaningful communication and heightens the issue of community identity among the African brothers or sisters. On balance, it seems that they have to adjust far more to our ways than we must to theirs; we should not make it harder for them than it already is. A written agenda should be drawn up for community meetings to enhance communication. If the discussion moves too quickly from subject to subject, the Africans may feel left behind. They should at least have time to think over the topic and prepare themselves for it. It is probably an advantage to any formator working in Africa if he or she has had to learn a new language and so has experienced the difficulties of communicating with fluent speakers of that language.

### BEHAVIORAL PATTERNS DIFFER

Desmond Morris's book *Manwatching* showed that although many physical postures and gestures are common worldwide, a good many are culturally conditioned. As Westerners living and working closely with young Africans, we need to be aware of certain cultural differences in behavior patterns.

**Eye Contact.** Many young Africans feel that it is forward to look elders in the eye when talking to them. We may easily misinterpret their avoidance of eye contact as a sign that they feel guilty about something.

# We cannot use our own sense of how we would respond in a similar crisis as a measure of how others should react

**Body Space.** The acceptable distance between people conversing in Africa is a good deal shorter than in many other cultures. If we keep the Western distance, we may be misinterpreted by Africans as not wanting to associate too closely with them.

**Privacy.** Westerners attach a great deal of value to their right to privacy. For Africans, this is generally not the case. In fact, in one village where I was staying, people asked me if I was sick when I said I wanted to go for a walk by myself. To go into one's room and close the door during the day is interpreted as saying "Do not disturb me." (Screen doors, fortunately, convey the message "Yes, I'm in for anyone, but not for mosquitoes.")

**Taboos.** Although many taboos are associated with male and female relationships (for example, you will rarely see a couple kissing in public), few exist between members of the same sex. It is a breakthrough moment for a Westerner when he or she can hold hands with an adult of the same sex in a public place and not feel uncomfortable.

**Hospitality.** Africans, like all other peoples of the world, value hospitality highly. When people visit, they should be treated as guests. It is considered an insult to ask visitors, "What do you want?" The point of the visit will eventually be revealed in light conversation. When visitors are ready to leave, they will let you know, and a little walk down the road with them is seen as a thank-you for the walk they made to your home. Tensions can arise in a com-

munity where there is a heavy schedule and a great number of unexpected visitors, but this problem can be solved by discussing and agreeing on a time for friends to visit. (An emphasis on inviting adults to discuss things, as opposed to giving them instructions, is very important; in Africa, orders are given only to children and those of low status.)

## APPROACHES TO PROBLEM SOLVING

The Westerner has a far more individualized sense of self than does the African. For this reason, Westerners tend to feel that serious issues are best worked out on a one-to-one basis. In my experience, this is usually not the best approach with Africans. It is far better to resolve matters in a community meeting at which everyone has an opportunity to speak. Unless the Westerner is very close to the individual concerned or has been in Africa a long time, he or she will come across as altogether too forceful in a private conversation concerning some serious issue. It is easy to forget that as Westerners, we have extremely high status in Africa. First, we are foreigners and guests, and are thus accorded a great deal of deference; second, we are seen as highly educated and articulate, which makes most of the Africans with whom we are living feel second-class; third, we have age and position in the community in our favor in any personal encounter. The Westerner simply will not hear what is on the African's mind in such a setting—unless, as mentioned above, he or she is especially close to the African or has lived in an African community for a long time.

In a similar vein, the formator's attempts at regular, private chats with a postulant or novice without having spent long periods of casual time with him or her—especially in a room that is usually not visited by the candidate—are doomed to failure. At best, such conversations will resemble question-and-answer interviews between a doctor and patient. The formator will probably be told what the candidate thinks he or she wants to hear, but little of real significance will be said.

When a crisis arises between the formator and a candidate, it should not be left to simmer. Because of our high status in the formation community, a candidate who feels unjustly treated may switch quickly from irrational outpourings against the formator to deep feelings of worthlessness—possibly even feelings that the community would be better off without him or her. We cannot use our own sense of how we would respond in a similar crisis as a measure of how others should react. Intermediaries can be of great value in resolving conflicts. They can calm a person down and restore perspective. Usually, other postulants or novices make the best intermediaries. On many occasions I have asked others in the group to perform this role and to raise the issue at the next community

meeting so it can be given a proper hearing. Often, a crisis in community is not so much about a certain issue as it is about emotions that have been neglected for some time. If these feelings are not addressed as quickly as possible, they will almost certainly be relived in the ensuing weeks.

## A WORD OF WARNING

A formation community consisting mostly of foreign-born directors can easily play out an episode of *Star Trek*, wherein the *USS Enterprise* lands on some strange and distant planet. Kirk, Spock, and the others decide that new crew members are needed. People come forward to be trained in the starship operation but are never invited onto the bridge to discuss the purpose and nature of the starship's mission in deep space. They become skilled technicians but are denied the opportunity to bring their own perceptions and insights to bear on the course of the mission. This should not happen when new members are accepted into the religious community. Yes, they will have to undergo basic, "non-negotiable" training; but if they are to be fully "owners" of the starship *Religious Life* and its mission, then those of us engaged in formation must accept the fact that our ministry has a cultural as well as a theological agenda. Unless we as formators take full cognizance of the

cultural aspect of formation, it is unlikely that the current generation of African religious will make the values within religious life their own—or, indeed, even be around at the start of the third millennium. The starship will have crashed.

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(signed) James J. Gill, S.J., M.D., Editor-in-Chief

# Organizational Skills for Ministry

David Coghlan, S.J.

**T**he noted organizational psychologist Edgar H. Schein, in his classic work *Organizational Psychology*, comments that "the effective utilization of people in any organized effort has always been a pressing problem in society." There has been a tremendous amount of theorizing and research regarding organizational dynamics over the past thirty years. As a result, we have witnessed a growing awareness among contemporary religious orders that they themselves are organizations, albeit of a distinctly unique form. A selective use of what is appropriate from the organizational disciplines is valuable, therefore, in providing models and frameworks for the benefit of organized apostolic ministry.

Religious are increasingly required to be skilled in organizational processes such as leadership, team ministry, planning, review, and organizational change. As Ronald Lippitt points out in "The Changing Leader-Follower Relationships of the 1980s" (*Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 1982), a new level of skill is required in both leader and follower roles; now follower training, not just leadership training, is required. This is true for religious in apostolic ministries; those in nonexecutive positions are expected to reflect on their own apostolic activity, to participate in team ministry, and to contribute to the corporate processes. Religious have many opportunities to be trained in key skills, frequently in conjunction with the assumption of a leadership post or a sabbatical.

A common issue is how religious in formation can be exposed to training or education that prepares them specifically to participate in ministry

with other religious and lay colleagues. Socialization processes, particularly in the novitiate, focus on constructing the basis for the young religious' life of prayer and endowing him or her with a knowledge and appreciation of the order's spirituality and its role in the church's mission. Frequently omitted is formation in skills in the organizational element of ministry—how to communicate effectively with colleagues, how to be a valuable team member, how to set goals. The relationship between an individual and an organization is a complex one that needs careful facilitation. This article describes a workshop that attempted to address these issues.

## ORGANIZATIONAL LEVELS TAUGHT

A five-day nonresidential workshop was held, consisting of approximately six hours of work daily for four days; the final day was a half day. Each of the participants was currently engaged in studies and so was not a member of an apostolic team. At the same time, each participated in a ministry outside of studies that involved some form of team or group work. They were all members of the same religious congregation but lived in different small communities in the same city and had a common director of formation, who initiated the workshop.

The specific conceptual foundation of the workshop was that of organizational levels in religious apostolic ministry, developed by myself and Nicholas S. Rashford, S.J. This framework conceives of a complex interrelationship between the individual religious and the order through four levels. Each

level (individual, face-to-face ministry team, province, and charism/mission) is defined in terms of tasks and key interventions.

These levels may be viewed as degrees or types of involvement, or as degrees of complexity, depending on whether one approaches the question from the point of view of the individual participating in the order or that of the order viewing the commitment of individuals. From the point of view of the individual, the least complex approach to participation is the relationship between the individual and the order. A more complex approach exists in the dynamics of a face-to-face working team in ministry. An even more complex involvement exists in terms of provincial or regional interface, in which teams spread over a region or teams of the same order that are engaged in different ministries must be coordinated to perform a unified activity. Finally, the most complex approach from the individual's point of view is the relationship of the total order to the church and to the external environment in which it ministers.

From the point of view of the order, the question is one of involvement. The most basic stage of involvement is to gain the commitment of the individual religious to the goals, values, and mission of the order. The second level of involvement is to establish good face-to-face working relationships in ministry teams. The third level of involvement is at the provincial or regional level, at which multiple ministries form a unified aggregate. Finally, the most complex of all is the unified effort of all members of an order to fulfill its mission in the contemporary world. This set of complex behaviors, then, is separated into a cognitive map—a mental construct of different types of participation and involvement—by the use of the concept of levels of participation. These levels of complexity are defined in terms of tasks. Each of the four levels has a double-sided task—one from the perspective of the individual and one from the perspective of the order. Each task is accompanied by an intervention that aids in its successful completion.

**Level I: Individual.** The task of the individual is to be himself or herself in the process of following God's call. The task of the religious congregation is to provide an appropriate psychological and religious contract for the religious and to form a context and environment attractive to individuals. When operating effectively at Level I, a religious will allow the congregation and its mission to be a source of personal goal motivation. The individual will still retain his or her own individuality while belonging to the congregation. The key intervention at this level is spiritual direction, in which the dynamics of the individual's relationship with God, in the context of apostolic companions and ministry, are located and juxtaposed so that the individual

can assess his or her own religious living in the context of his or her life and desires.

**Level II: Face-to-Face Ministry Team.** The individual enters into face-to-face working relationships in ministry. Effectiveness on this level means that a team is capable of identifying and correcting its own dysfunctions. The individual's task is to contribute to the team's functioning, whereas the team's task is to be a functioning unit. The religious congregation's task is to see that the team's work is significant in terms of the overall apostolic endeavor. The key intervention at this level is team-building.

**Level III: Province.** At the provincial/regional level, multiple face-to-face ministry teams and communities function together to accomplish the goals of the province. The congregation's task is to help these units form an effective aggregate. The key intervention at this level is strategic management in which the expressed, chosen strategic direction of the province's apostolic thrust is coordinated among the interrelated systems of the province.

**Level IV: Charism/Mission.** At this level, the congregation's task is to minister to the contemporary world according to the spirit of its constitutions. The congregation must be able to map its internal resources as well as the external environment in its work of evangelization. This requires a deep-rooted, united spirituality of the congregation's charism, an assessment of the internal resources of the congregation, and a knowledge of the external world. These are integrated to form a direction for the congregation in a given time frame in the concrete world.

## LEVELS ARE INTERLINKED

There are close links between the levels. For instance, an action taken on Level IV might affect a team's functioning (Level II) and lead to a reduction in an individual's sense of belonging (Level I). Thus, a triggering event on Level IV must be dealt with on Levels I and II. Effectiveness on Level II depends on Level I being in place, Level III depends on Levels I and II, and Level IV on all three earlier levels. The delineation of levels in terms of definition, tasks, and key intervention provides a valuable diagnostic construct for the superior, the director of an apostolate, the formation director, and the spiritual director.

## ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS IDENTIFIED

John Beck and Charles Cox, in their work on developing organizational skills for managers (described in *Management Development: Advances in Practice and Theory*), use a taxonomy of social skills that distinguishes personal, interpersonal, group, intergroup, and organizational skills. Such a clas-

sification system provides a basis for articulating a range of skills that would be appropriate for religious in a formation workshop. The Beck and Cox model of social skills in a wider system corresponds with the Coghlan and Rashford framework.

**Level I Skills.** The Level I personal skills selected for attention in the workshop focused on the adult process of "learning how to learn." Because the formation process itself focuses specifically on such key dynamics as spiritual direction and meeting with the formation director, these interventions were not considered material for training. Spiritual direction skills are typically attended to in a separate context.

The Lewinian action-research model has been translated by David Kolb (in *Theories of Group Processes*, edited by Cary Cooper) into an experiential learning cycle. This learning cycle provides the basis for the interplay between an adult's experience and the world of theory. Key concepts in focusing on experiential learning are Chris Argyris's notions (also described in *Theories of Group Processes*) of single- and double-loop learning, espoused theory, and theory-in-use. The notion of learning in the laboratory and transferring that learning "back home" is based on the work of Ronald Lippitt.

**Level II Skills.** Interpersonal and team skills can be taken together, since Level II is defined in terms of face-to-face working relationships. Four skills were selected. The first was interpersonal communication, in terms of sending and receiving messages appropriately. The second was group process—communication, roles, leadership, decision making, problem solving, norms—as described, for instance, in Edgar Schein's *Process Consultation*. The third skill was working in a collaborative manner—what Schein calls "process consultation." This approach defines and describes a way a consultant can work with a client so that the client can see, understand, and act on process events in his or her environment. It is an approach that empowers the client to act. The consultation process develops in stages, from initial contact to termination. In *Process Consultation, Volume II*, Schein describes a typology of interventions—exploratory, diagnostic, action alternatives, and confronting—that focuses on minimal inference and attribution. The typology thus provides a useful training tool, as trainees can use it in skill rehearsal, experimenting with intervention behaviors. Finally, Transactional Analysis provided a structure for understanding human interaction and for skill training in face-to-face situations.

**Level III Skills.** The intergroup skills are based on the general notion of how groups develop their own culture and have their own symbols, languages,

and norms. Material on intergroup conflict, found in general organizational and group literature, is also relevant.

**Level IV Skills.** At this level, the congregation is viewed as a single identity ministering in the contemporary world. My article "Corporate Planning in Religious Orders" (HUMAN DEVELOPMENT, Summer 1987) describes the four basic ingredients of the planning process for a religious congregation—a sense of its charism, environmental analysis, a knowledge of its internal resources, and strategic posture—all put together in terms of concrete choices in a given time frame.

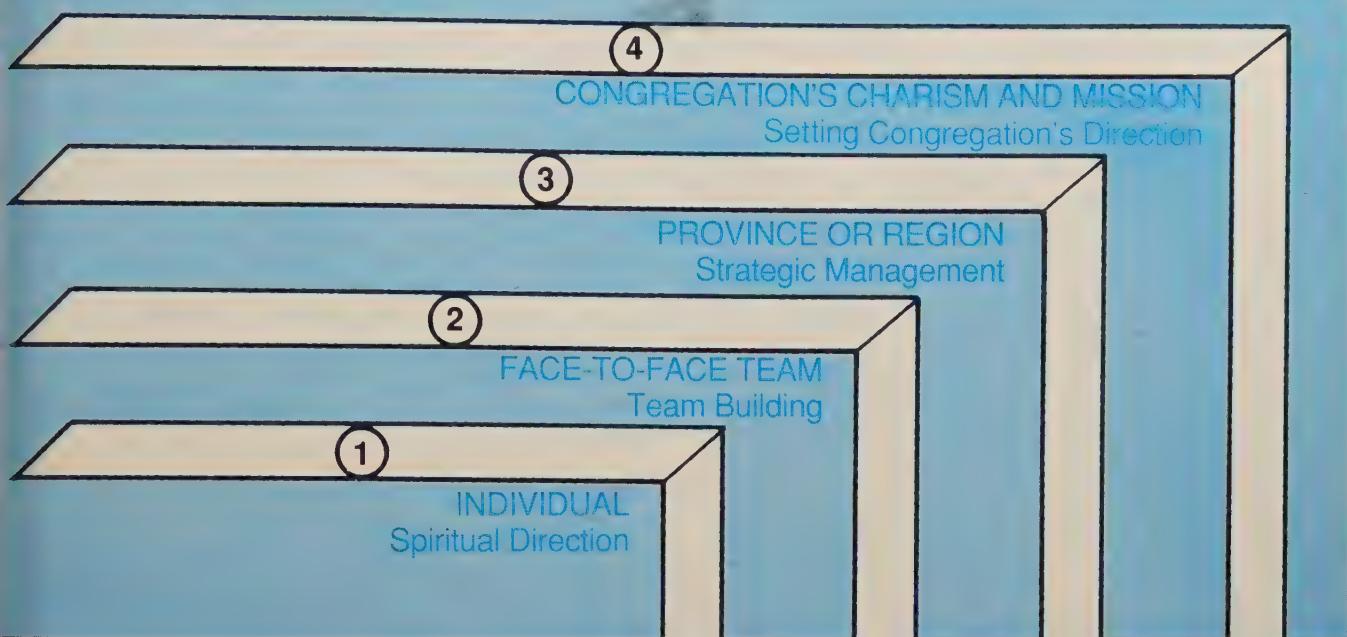
## THE WORKSHOP OUTLINE

**Day One.** The first day of the workshop began with an overview of the conceptual model on which it was based. The model was presented in terms of tasks, key interventions, and the skills that the workshop would focus on at each level. This model was presented to the groups for approval and modification. On the basis of the ensuing discussion, managing conflict was added to the agenda. This was followed by a brief lecture on experiential learning and related issues such as single- and double-loop learning, espoused theory, and theory-in-use. The second part of the morning was devoted to the process of goal and contract setting. The participants were invited to reflect on their personal goals for the workshop and the skills they particularly wanted to learn. They also selected specific personal agenda items they would be prepared to use in interpersonal communication activities. The participants then formed community groups and selected community issues they would be prepared to use as agendas in group activities. Each participant was urged to invite another to act as a learning companion for the duration of the workshop. A learning companion was described as someone with whom a participant could daily share his or her learning goals and observations on how the workshop was affecting the attainment of those goals.

The afternoon was devoted to the participation of small groups in group tasks that were recorded on video and then reviewed. The review focused on the dynamics of each of the small groups and highlighted such things as decision making, norms, leadership, and functional roles. Brief discussions of each of these areas closed the day.

**Day Two.** The focus for the second day was the theory and practice of the process-consultation approach, which was presented as a model for working with persons and groups. The phases of such a relationship were explained, and instruction on using intervention methods was provided. The remainder of the day was devoted to a threefold

# Levels and Key Interventions in Religious Apostolic Ministry



process. One community sat in a "fishbowl" situation and discussed a community agenda of its own choice. Another community observed this process and acted as process consultants to the group, intervening as the members saw fit in terms of process consultation. A third community observed the intervention and then acted as process consultants to the whole exercise when it was completed. After a review discussion the process continued, with each community taking a turn at being clients, consultants, and review consultants (this system was designed to accommodate the number of communities present at the workshop). Learning emerged through the interplay of the three roles: each community discussed its business in front of the other communities, attempted to act as consultants in a collaborative manner, and experienced three roles in working on this task.

**Day Three.** This day, the midpoint of the workshop, was designed as a half-day; only the morning was designated as workshop time. The focus for the day was on interpersonal skills, primarily through Transactional Analysis. Input on Transactional Analysis, conflict resolution, and communication was complemented by a threefold process in which triads were formed. Each participant in turn observed an interpersonal dialogue between two other participants and engaged in two dialogues, in

one as a listener and in the other as an individual presenting a personal agenda.

**Day Four.** The fourth day centered on the inter-group (Level III) dynamics among the communities represented at the workshop. Each community group met to discuss how each of the other formation communities was similar to it and different from it in terms of culture, norms, and structures. Then each community hosted a feedback session in which a representative of that community (called the host) met emissaries from the other communities to hear their comments on what had emerged. The community groups then reconvened to discuss what they had learned from the others. A review session followed, in which a brief explanation of community culture was given. The final part of the day was given to an exploration of areas in which the communities anticipated a need to interact over the coming year.

**Day Five.** As Level IV is defined in terms of the order as a single entity ministering in the contemporary world, the focus during day five was on the external environment. My article "Corporate Planning in Religious Orders" (HUMAN DEVELOPMENT, Summer 1987) was distributed for study the previous evening. After discussion with the order's central administrative office, an area of policy was

selected in which consultation with those in formation was desired. The person with responsibility for that area joined the workshop and explained that the consultation was indeed real and that what emerged would be taken into account. A brief review of the processes of corporate planning and distinguishing levels of policy from programs was given.

The participants formed groups on the basis of particular headings within the area under consultation and drew up lists of issues with which they had had experience. These lists were posted and discussed. There followed a brainstorming session in which possible solutions or programs that might address these issues were expressed. This session ended with an invitation for the group to choose two members to attend a policy meeting some weeks later. The two elected representatives participated in a task force that animated and coordinated that area of policy.

The last hours of the workshop were devoted to reviews of the basic concept of organizational levels and of the learning cycle as it applies to transferring learning from the workshop to daily living. An evaluation form was distributed in order to obtain feedback.

## DIAGNOSIS IS INTERVENTION

This article has described the pedagogy of an organizational-skills workshop for religious in formation, built on a particular framework of organizational levels and the skills associated with successful participation at each level. The framework attempts to link how religious participate in their orders and how relationships exist between the individual's belonging, the team's functioning, the province's functioning as an aggregate of interministry networks, and the order's ministering in the contemporary world. Each level focuses on a key actor—the individual, the ministry team, the province, or the order—and provides an integrated framework for understanding organizational behavior.

Both the notion of organizational levels and the theory and practice of process consultation promote a form of organizational "action research" that enables participants in organizations to recognize their own experience in the constructs. The fruit of such recognition is not only the single-loop learning of how to improve effectiveness but also

the double-loop learning in questioning basic assumptions and understanding why things are the way they are. Diagnosis and intervention are irreversibly linked and interwoven. To attempt diagnosis is to intervene.

As an integrated framework, the concept of organizational levels has proved to be a valid and useful training and development model. In the formation-training setting described, time constraints limited the agenda. Much else could have been covered in a more extensive course. Because the participants were students and not members of apostolic teams, the workshop was designed to create the dynamics of each level through simulated activities. The transfer of learning to community living and future apostolic ministry is an unknown variable. It is hoped that this article contributes to developing the understanding and further clarification of the organizational-levels framework and to providing a model for developing important and necessary social and organizational skills for religious in formation.

## RECOMMENDED READING

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# *An Ignatian Approach to Religious Education*

*Thérèse Daly, I.B.V.M.*

**W**hat did he say when he was dying?" I asked my mother, who was grieving over her brother's death. I was six years old at the time. "He said it was like beautiful music," she told me. Her words gave me a positive image of death and life after death.

I must have been younger still when I found myself alone in our garden, sitting inside a watsonia plant in bloom. As I looked up at the pink flowers against the blue sky, the sheer beauty of my little world entranced me, and I felt a presence beyond the immediacy of that experience.

Our own experiences may be difficult to convey to others, but they cannot be debated. They are real, authentic, at times disturbing, and at times life-giving. Life expands through the sharing of experiences. We tell others about our favorite books, the places we visit, the plants we grow, and the ideas we nurture; mystics tell us of deeper experiences and deeper realities. Saint Ignatius of Loyola (1491–1556) shared his experience of his time of prayer, struggles, and reflections in a cave at Manresa in a little notebook that grew by degrees into his *Spiritual Exercises*. Ignatius invites us to adapt the Exercises to our age, ability, circumstances, or culture.

The Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Loreto) has been strongly influenced by Ignatius's teachings. Our English foundress, Mary Ward (1585–645), had the courage, despite immense opposition, to trust the insights gained in her prayer experience to define her founding charism. A grace she received in 1611 led her to the *Spiritual Exercises* and to the constitutions of the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) insofar as they were applicable to women. In Mary Ward's life, as in her writings, we

discern an interplay of experience, reflection, decision, and action. These are at the heart of Ignatian spirituality.

## **DISCERNING THE WAY**

As a teacher and coordinator of religious education in secondary schools during most of the 1970s and 1980s, I was led increasingly to encourage students to reflect on their own experience. Such reflection is often more enriching than the experience itself. I used many strategies within class periods to encourage reflection. For example, after each student-led class session, I allowed about three minutes for the students to reflect on what they had liked about it. The next five minutes were devoted to sharing these reflections with the class. The positive feedback affirmed the young leaders and built an atmosphere of trust within the group. My involvement (since 1982) in Christian Life Communities encouraged me further along this reflective way.

My investigations into what Mary Ward's adoption of the Ignatian way might mean for religious educators began unwittingly when, in the early 1980s, I reflected on my experience of what was happening and not happening in the classroom. Gradually I tried to face the following questions:

1. What steps could I take to help form students in Christian decision making on the Ignatian model?
2. How could I bring others toward a discovery of God in their own hearts—the only place to begin finding him?

# Ignatius had much to say that is applicable and appealing in the twentieth century

previously thought of as very unpromising material. Despite his sixteenth-century phraseology, Ignatius had much to say that is applicable and appealing in the twentieth century. The flexibility so characteristic of Ignatius's approach becomes increasingly evident in the reading and use of the Exercises. Ignatius proposes any method of prayer that comfortably engages the whole of us. He recommends whatever prayer posture helps us to find what we desire: lying on the floor, kneeling, sitting, even a yoga position. There is no need to keep "pushing on" in prayer; we stay where we find what we desire.

The purpose of the Exercises is to bring us to freedom. They help us to distinguish between being free before all that has been created and being used and enslaved by forces that destroy us (for example, materialism or consumerism). The Exercises are designed to help us face the choices that come our way from the standpoint of the inner "contentful freedom" that Mary Ward recognized in her prayer.

## COURSE BASED ON EXERCISES

In 1984 we introduced a pilot course based on the pedagogy and process of the Exercises. Seventy-two students, ages 16 to 17 and in their second-to-last year of secondary school, were involved.

After preliminary discussion, the three 11th-year religious education teachers decided to work as a team. We agreed to try to model in our weekly team meetings the Ignatian ways we hoped to initiate in our class sessions (three forty-minute periods weekly). At team meetings a pattern emerged in harmony with the way of proceeding adopted by Ignatius and his "friends in the Lord" and by Mary Ward and her first followers. The team members became collaborators, discerning the course to take in each situation with each group of students.

In 1985, the second year of our Ignatian course, we had three fifty-minute class sessions weekly, with a team of two lay teachers and two religious teachers guiding 102 students. In our weekly team meetings, we evaluated the teaching processes and strategies used in the previous year's course and adapted them for the current year.

My experience in initiating this pedagogy of the *Spiritual Exercises* was one of coming home to a newfound ease in teaching. Because these Exercises involved all of us, the spotlight was removed from me as a teacher. I came to see that it was valid to call the one who leads the Exercises a teacher/guide/facilitator. My students and I were on a pilgrimage together, a shared journey.

## PLANNING TEAM'S APPROACH

At our weekly team meetings, we teachers saw the need to determine the following:

3. What were the students asking for when they said, "You, all of you, teach us about good; why don't you teach us about evil?"

In the *Spiritual Exercises*, adapted as Ignatius suggests, lay the answers to my three questions:

1. The Exercises are designed to help us grow in discernment, just as Mary Ward had learned to do from early childhood.
2. Ignatian strategies help us discover God at work deep within our hearts.
3. The Exercises help us take the whole of reality into consideration—good and evil, mess and wholeness, success and failure—surely the balance needed for an integrated program of religious education.

Acting on this new insight with my 12th-year religious education classes of 1981–83, I found myself introducing concepts centering on the Foundation, or "Preface," to the *Spiritual Exercises*. The "fall" myth (Genesis 2:4b-31) touched on first-stage concepts. I introduced a second-stage concept by talking about the antonyms and synonyms of the Beatitudes. For example, the peacemakers who are blessed (Matthew 5:9) could be the listening ones, rather than the unlistening; the open ones rather than the closed-minded; or the harmonizers rather than the dividers in families, communities, and nations.

The positive responses of my students encouraged me to try more consciously to insert our congregation's founding charism into my work as a religious educator, and I began a careful exploration of the text of the *Spiritual Exercises*. I came by degrees to find many treasures in what I had

- What exercises would be most relevant to the students in their present situations?
- What exercises would develop the organic thread of Ignatius's First Principle and Foundation in the first term? (Each term was allocated approximately twenty-four fifty-minute class sessions.)
- What exercises would develop the organic thread of the Exercises' first stage in the second term?
- What exercises would maintain the organic thread of the "Kingdom" meditation and of the second stage in the third term?
- What exercises would produce the desired attitude ("fruit")—a key Ignatian element?

In order to model the approach to be taken with our students, we introduced into our weekly team meeting schedule the following:

- A pause at the beginning of each session, to foster attunement to God.
- The reading of a short passage of scripture to nourish us on the word of God; scripture is an integral part of the journey of the Exercises.
- A pause for reflection before the conclusion of each meeting.

In determining teaching approaches, we kept in mind the following essential Ignatian strategies:

- Learning through involving the whole person—an appropriate learning model in an audiovisual age.
- Learning through self-discovery; going over things and pondering them individually for greater spiritual nourishment.
- Balancing approaches, sometimes inviting a lot of thinking and reasoning, at other times eliciting a response from the heart.
- Teaching through opposites ("contraries")—for example, examining options (the option of serving God and others or serving self) or exploring which forces build a world of harmony and which fragment our world.
- Exercising gentle respect, a Christlike touch: when a student is troubled, don't be severe and harsh; instead, be gentle and kind.
- Allowing the students a few minutes before the end of each session for reflection and journal keeping.

At times there were opportunities for students to share with the class. By degrees the class became a community journeying in faith.

## FIRST-TERM PROGRAM, 1985

**Aim.** At this stage, preparatory to the Exercises, our aim was to initiate a search for meaning and wholeness in life. With the focus on the order of creation, we hoped to help the students build a

positive image of self, God, others, and the world. Content, process, and strategies centered on the Foundation concept of goodness, wholeness, and order. We helped the students become aware that:

- God not only creates us in love but also sustains us in being and invites us to recognize this and to respond freely in love.
- God's gifts are not just for ourselves, but for all people to share.
- Rather than be controlled by consumerism and materialism, we can be free before all that has been created.

**Course Outline.** Our initial agenda for the course came from the students themselves. We asked them to fill in an anonymous questionnaire on "What concerns me," stating their concerns about themselves, their relationships, and their views of God, others, and the world. The four teachers spent several hours collating the four sections of this questionnaire. We put positive feedback under the heading "Order" and negative feedback under the heading "Disorder." The positive responses formed the basis of our work on the Foundation. The negative ones provided second-term concepts: "our brokenness/sinfulness face to face with Jesus' healing love," the first stage of the Exercises.

The use of the students' own agenda is in tune with the Ignatian strategy of entering into people's lives through the doorways they provide in order to attract them to the place where one wants to lead them.

We then encouraged the students to question their very questionings. This is a time for exploration of fundamental questions, to try to stir the immortal longings at the core of all our hearts:

- What is the meaning of life?
- Who am I?
- Why was I created?
- If God made me to share his love, what are the implications?
- How do I relate to the rest of creation?
- What choices am I faced with?

We invited students to reflect on the positive responses and to formulate a statement on their own concept of order. We also initiated reflections on brief outlines of various philosophies of life. The students were invited to compose their own philosophy statements.

By this time, the students seemed interested when we introduced them to our Foundation statement—fifteen lines that Ignatius wrote as the germ of the whole journey of the Exercises. Each student rewrote the statement, making it personal: "God, you created me to . . ." We encouraged much reflection on their own personal versions. St. Ignatius calls this pondering the untranslatable *sentir e*

*gustar*: "for it is not so much knowledge that fills and satisfies the soul (person) but the intimate understanding and savoring of things."

Students worked in groups of five on concepts and scripture texts centering on the Foundation in order to interiorize them. This activity provided an opportunity for students to exercise leadership and creativity. Each group chose one of the thirteen Foundation concepts to prepare a meditation, class activity, or reflection in order to lead a thirty-five-minute class session followed by review and reflection. These sessions had to be related to the students, their own experience, and the world. The expression of their own culture, language, movement, and music led the young people to a contemporary awareness of God's plan for a creation of order, goodness, and wholeness. Through preparing and leading these sessions, the students became more and more the evangelizers of young people. I found myself listening, learning, and loving as they led me to new depths of awareness.

## SECOND-TERM PROGRAM, 1985

**Aim.** In beginning the first stage of the Exercises, our aim was to build an awareness of what is sinful at the personal, social, and cosmic levels and of the mystery of Jesus' healing, forgiving love. We used various strategies to focus on disorder. We followed the Ignatian method of reflecting on scripture passages appropriate to first-stage concepts. Content, process, and strategies centered around coming to discover the healing presence of Jesus in our own helplessness, brokenness, and disorder. We asked God for an awareness that:

- Disorder exists in the world, in others, and in myself.
- Jesus, on the cross, enters into this disorder and is the source of healing.

**Course Outline.** Again, our initial agenda came from the students themselves. Using the negative student responses to the question "What concerns me?" we sharpened their all-too-evident awareness of alienation, helplessness, and broken relationships—destructive forces at work.

We again provided students with scope for searching by posing universal questions that relate to first-stage concepts:

What is in me?

What is the darkness in the world?

Why do I find division elsewhere and in me?

Where do I experience forgiveness, healing, and wholeness?

We invited reflection on the negative responses and used various teaching strategies to develop an awareness of disorder at the cosmic, social, and

personal levels. In the face of evil, many young people feel bewildered and powerless. Ignatian pedagogy brings us face to face with this existential reality of evil; it leads us to the discovery that it is in the midst of our own helplessness and disorder that Jesus meets us with his healing love.

We studied the Genesis myth to explore its meaning for the writers of Genesis and for us today. We focused on the implications of enjoying God's creation but bypassing the Creator, and of enjoying the gifts of God's creation but denying others their rightful share in them. The student guidesheet for preparing to lead class sessions was from *Orientations*, written by Father John Veltri, S.J. This sheet provided the basic structure for group-led sessions on the First Exercise of the first stage.

As a starting point for further activities prepared and led by the students, we introduced the short film *The Hands*, in which Marcel Marceau uses his hands to represent the tension between the forces of good and evil. The students illustrated these contrasting forces creatively, using body collage, music, mime, dance, and movement; their presentations involved the whole class. We fostered an awareness of ways in which we are tempted and ways through which we come to peace in terms of the seven capital sins—the seven areas of our sin/salvation experience.

I have discovered that at this stage of investigating disorder, the religious educator needs to ask for the gift of deep faith in the saving event of history, Christ's death. There is a need to stand aside and allow others the experience of just being there, facing Jesus on the cross. Ignatius does not mean for us to turn in on our own helplessness; instead, he invites us to face our common brokenness, only to find Christ—the one who saves—in this very brokenness, healing all that would divide us from our real selves, from others, and from God. As we face Jesus on the cross, we are encouraged to open ourselves to him, "speaking exactly as one friend speaks to another." Such exercises as meditating on the cross remind us of what Jesus has done for us.

The celebration of the sacrament of reconciliation ended the first stage of our journey and prepared us for the "bridge" between the first and second stages—the meditation on the Kingdom—in which we further explored our deepest longings.

## SOME FINAL REFLECTIONS

The course we followed has been outlined only in general terms. We teachers agreed at our team meetings to be flexible according to the needs of our students and our own teaching skills.

A strange thing began to happen when we came from our class sessions and asked our fellow team members how their sessions had gone. Several observed, "The time wasn't long enough." We felt

xhilaration, peace, and new heart—quite a new xperience for us as secondary-school religion teachers. A bond was forming among us and in our class groups. We saw signs of inner growth, conversion, and a new appreciation of life. We appreciated this journey that had much to do with listening, respect, openness, and honesty. We became increasingly aware that the Ignatian way provides a firm basis for an authentic approach to social justice.

The Foundation meditation initiates an awareness that the gifts of creation, destined for all people, are to be shared with responsibility. The first stage brings an awareness of the divisions in ourselves and in the world when the destructive forces of disorder—pride, selfishness, and greed—dictate our attitudes and actions. The person conscious of being healed and loved through an encounter with Jesus dying on the cross is attuned to Jesus' call to help him in his kingdom building today.

In the second stage, we bring into the reality of the present situation the mysteries of Jesus' life up to his passion to discern how to enter more deeply into companionship with him. This process alerts us to how we are deceived when we make selfishness the motive of our lives and self-interest the criterion of our choices.

As the course developed, it became evident that an adaptation of the *Spiritual Exercises* offered an opportunity to bring ourselves and those we teach to a place where we can, as the Jesuit delegates wrote at their 33rd General Congregation, "choose where we stand in the struggle between good and evil, between faith and unbelief, between the yearning for justice and peace and the growing reality of injustice and strife."

While reflecting on the experience of teaching religious education through Mary Ward's Ignatian way, I have asked myself why young people have responded to it so positively and have come to realize that it is an appropriate method for young people who search. It is not for people who feel they have the answer to every question about faith and life; it is for those of us who at times question our very questionings as we identify with the weak and powerless. It is appropriate for young people who are open. It is for those of us who know only too well that we are weak, vulnerable, and broken; that we are in need of a Savior whose healing love invites us to come even as we are—as sinners—to

help with his kingdom building today. It is appropriate for young people who long for authentic freedom. It is not for people who are content with the upward mobility demanded by the pressures of consumerism and materialistic values; it is instead for those of us who look for the inner freedom of a simple life-style. It is appropriate for young people ready for challenge, not for ostrichlike people who hide their heads in the sand. It is for those of us who are searching for a spirituality that touches the nitty-gritty of our daily lives and extends our horizons so that we can more effectively probe questions of vital concern in our community, nation, and world.

This Ignatian way of integration is not for people who are determined to keep religion in one pigeon-hole and life in another. Its aim is to help us to find God in our hearts, to meet him in our deepest longings.

#### RECOMMENDED READINGS

Arupe, P. *In Him Alone Is Our Hope: Texts on the Heart of Christ*. St. Louis, Missouri: Institute of Jesuit Sources.

Fitzpatrick, D. *Confusion, Call, Commitment—The Spiritual Exercises and Religious Education*. New York, New York: Alba House, 1976.

Fleming, D. *The Spiritual Exercises: A Contemporary Reading*. St. Louis, Missouri: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1976.

Orchard, E. (ed.): *Till God Will—Mary Ward Through Her Writings*. London, England: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1985.

Sauvé, J. "A World View of Jesuit Education as Related to Ignatian Spirituality," in *Jesuit Education*. Rome, Italy: C.I.S., 1981.



Sister Thérèse Daly, I.B.V.M., conducts seminars on an Ignatian approach to religious education for secondary-school teachers in Australia. She also serves as an advisor to teams of educators who are developing this strategy.

# BOOK REVIEW

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*Paying Attention to God: Discernment in Prayer*, by William A. Barry, S.J. Notre Dame, Indiana: Ave Maria Press, 1990. 126 pp. \$5.95.

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**F**ather William Barry, well known as a spiritual director and writer on spiritual direction, has reworked several of his valuable earlier articles into this brief, useful book. His aim is "to make prayer believable for ordinary people."

Barry is convinced that "the mystery we call God wants a personal relationship with every person" and that we encounter God in mysterious ways. Frank to acknowledge the influences of the Scottish theologian John Macmurray and the British Benedictine Dom Sebastian Moore on his thought, Barry writes to help people pay attention to these encounters ("to become aware of their creation") and recognize some barriers to a more intimate relationship with God. About seventy percent of the book (by far the richest section for me) explores prayer as an expression of a personal relationship and the role of prayer in personal discernment.

A quote from the British psychiatrist J. S. MacKenzie illustrates Barry's goal:

The enjoyment of God should be the supreme end of spiritual technique and it is in that enjoyment of God that we are saved not only in the evangelical sense, but safe . . . conscious of belonging to God . . . never alone. . . . Nature seems friendly and homely . . . and the nearer beauty becomes the garment with which the Almighty clothes Himself.

If this raises fears that the book is just one more self-indulgent bath in New-Age denial, banish

those fears. Barry well realizes that evil exists, suffering exists, bad things do happen to good people. He quotes Macmurray:

The maxim of illusory religion runs: "Fear not; trust in God and He will see that none of the things you fear will happen to you"; that of real religion, on the contrary, is: "Fear not; the things that you are afraid of are quite likely to happen to you, but they are nothing to be afraid of."

Pouring out one's honest feelings to God, "experiencing the pain" in prayer, may sometimes intensify the pain, but often enough, "darkness and light, pain and joy, death and resurrection are fused, are one experience, and darkness, pain and death do not triumph."

I found the shorter section that follows, on "some issues of communal discernment," less satisfying. Not that the issues raised (enlarging our cultural horizons, dealing with controversial matters in the church, the role of women in the church) are unimportant. Precisely because they are so important, they deserve consideration at greater length and with more than a perfunctory nod to positions or nuances other than those Barry could present in thirty pages.

The final dozen pages contain a beautiful meditation on death and resurrection, and a sharing of three of the author's personal experiences of death and resurrection. Not sensational "out-of-body" experiences, but experiences taken from the nitty-gritty of daily life.

There is a short bibliography with helpful, pithy one-sentence annotations. This book is proof that good things do indeed sometimes come in small packages.

—Jon J. O'Brien, S.J., D.O.



# Book-of-the-Year Announcement

**O**ne of the surest signs of human maturity is a person's readiness to take responsibility for his or her work performance, relationships, decisions, personal development, and health. Mature individuals know that the richness of their lives cannot wisely be left to chance; they accept the fact that the intellectual, spiritual, cultural, and moral quality of their day-to-day existence depends predominantly on what they choose to make it, not on what accidentally happens to them. The goal of the mature—especially the spiritually developed—is to become as complete a person as possible, with God's help, and then to share with the young whatever has been learned through experience that could serve to enrich their unfolding lives. Such generosity contributes to the ever-increasing treasury of blessings that successive generations of children providentially inherit from the culture into which they are born.

Some of the major contributions being made today to improve life for future generations are found within the health sciences. And perhaps the most exciting of these is the new knowledge being gained by researchers who, through exploring the mysteries of the mind-body relationship, are discovering ways in which a person's mental and emotional functioning can affect one's physical health and help to restore it when it has become impaired. One remarkable finding is that the body's immune system, which provides the pugnacious white cells that engage and annihilate invading bacteria, viruses, and cancer cells, operates most effectively when a person maintains loving, hopeful, and playful attitudes. The system suffers a loss in its power to heal when moods such as fear, depression, and hostility prevail.

Author Norman Cousins is a man who has learned from personal experience that the mind has a wondrous capability to facilitate

the healing of the body. In his autobiographical *Anatomy of an Illness*, he recounted the story of his successful efforts to use hope, love, and laughter to cure his life-threatening illness. But not content with merely delivering that report, Mr. Cousins left his position as editor of the distinguished *Saturday Review* in order to join a team of research scientists at the University of California at Los Angeles who are studying the mind's ability to influence health and disease. After ten instructive years among these colleagues, he has given the world, in his recent *Head First: The Biology of Hope*, a fascinating glimpse at the current state of their research and the promising clinical applications they are discovering. Because the book is full of intriguing, hope-generating, and profound insights of interest to everyone who values life and wellness, and is written in a thoroughly enjoyable style, we believe that it qualifies unquestionably for the HUMAN DEVELOPMENT Book-of-the-Year Award.

We thank and congratulate E.P. Dutton in New York, the publisher of *Head First*, but especially we express our appreciation to Norman Cousins, who has done what we continually encourage the readers of HUMAN DEVELOPMENT to do: reflect upon your experience, identify what you think could be of benefit to others who are engaged in work and a way of life similar to your own, and write a report from which they can learn and profit. Mr. Cousins has done precisely that, and it is for this lucid display of human maturity, as well as his splendid book, that we honor him and celebrate his very fruitful change of career.



James J. Gill, S.J., M.D.  
Editor-in-Chief